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SPIRITISM IN GHANA:

A Study of New Religious Movements

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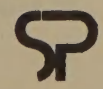

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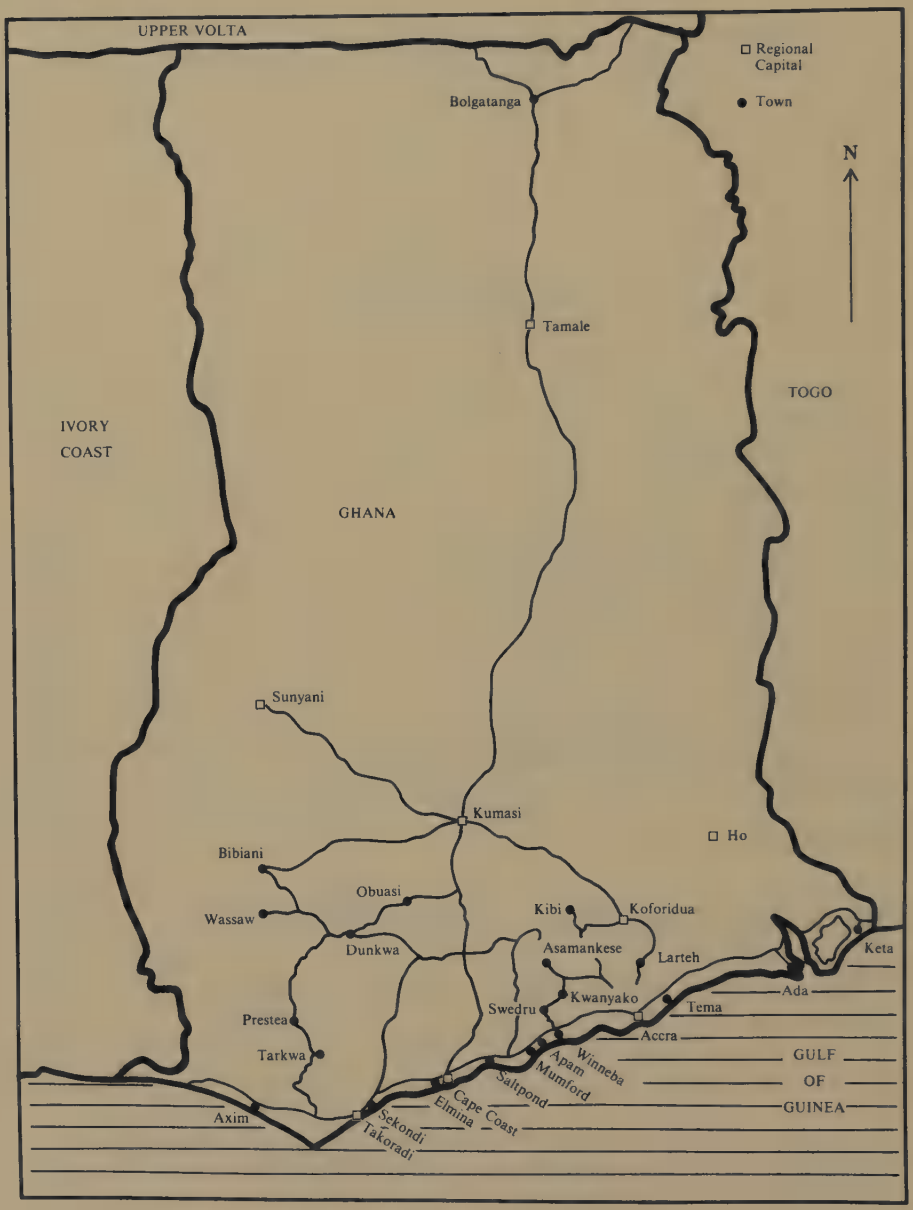
MAP 1. GHANA, SHOWING MAIN ROADS, REGIONAL CAPITALS AND OTHER MAJOR TOWNS.



I
INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Study

The subject of this study is the independent Spiritist or prophet-healing churches of southern Ghana, viewed at the local, grassroots level as they appear in one particular community. The study itself is an outgrowth of field research which was begun in 1964 when I spent a year investigating the traditional religious system of the Effutu people of Winneba, a Ghanaian coastal town. When I returned to Ghana in September of 1967 for a further year, the research focussed upon the Christian community of Winneba and, in particular, upon the Spiritist churches whose activities I had become increasingly interested in during my previous stay.

As originally conceived, the research was designed to provide material for a sociological account of Effutu Spiritist churches as they appeared in the late 1960's, but by the summer of 1968 it had become evident that many questions relating to the dynamics of Spiritism could not be dealt with adequately without extending the period of research. Academic and other commitments elsewhere made a protracted stay in Ghana impossible, but I was able to make two short visits to the field in 1970 and 1977, each of these lasting some six weeks. From 1967 to 1977 I was extremely fortunate in retaining the services of two very capable Effutu research assistants, both of whom were trained in sociology at the University of Cape Coast and who were permanent residents of Winneba. This helped greatly in maintaining continuity in the research over a fairly long period and also made the resumption of field research on each occasion a relatively smooth affair.

Despite their increasing prominence during the post-independence period, the Spiritist churches in Ghana have not been the subject of an extensive literature. Baëta's short study, published in 1962, is the only book which deals exclusively with Ghanaian Spiritism; this pioneering work offers sympathetic accounts of five of the major groups existing at the time, together with a survey of four lesser bodies, and its orientation is theological, rather than sociological.[1] Beckmann's study of a Ghanaian Pentecostal group known as Eden Revival contains some general information on "Spiritual" churches and similar bodies in other parts of Africa and in the West Indies, although his account is somewhat fragmentary and impressionistic.[2] There are a number of short, descriptive accounts of particular groups from an historical or a theological perspective,[3] while Breidenbach's two articles on

the Twelve Apostles focus upon the symbolism of this particular Spiritist group.[4]

The Spiritist churches are treated briefly in a number of community studies undertaken by anthropologists or sociologists,[5] and in accounts of the orthodox denominations produced by scholars whose interests lie mainly in the fields of church history or comparative religion.[6] Articles offering a sociological treatment of the subject are relatively scarce, although at present the only substantial sociological study available is Fernandez' long article on the Apostles' Revelation Society, a Spiritist church operating in the Volta region of the country.[7] There is no Ghanaian counterpart of Peel's in-depth, sociological study of two Nigerian "Aladura" churches, nor of Turner's comprehensive historical and theological analysis of the Church of the Lord, another Nigerian body.[8]

Sundkler, the author of what is still widely regarded as the best account of independent African religious movements, has appealed for more local studies and the present work is generally in line with this research guide.[9] Local studies, however, may be of various kinds: they may, as in the case of Peel's work, focus upon a comparison of two groups which operate in the same social and cultural milieu;[10] or they may, as in Turner's study, deal with one group and trace its spread from an original local center to a number of widely-dispersed points within an international region.[11] The major strengths of such studies lie in what they are able to reveal about the groups as organic wholes, of the relations between their constituent parts, of the overall patterns of authority and organization, and of the official teachings and doctrines of the groups concerned.

My own preference has been for a study which focusses upon Spiritism as it is conceived and practised at the level of the local assembly. Such a focus must necessarily entail a certain loss as far as our understanding of the broader structure and functioning of any one church is concerned, but this may be compensated for, in part, by the opportunities it provides for examining, at close quarters, the Spiritist life in a fairly large number of assemblies. This approach would seem to be particularly appropriate in an investigation of Ghanaian Spiritism, since much of the presently available information has been derived from interviews with church founders or national heads and very little from assembly-level enquiries; and unlike several of the Nigerian independent groups, the Ghanaian Spiritist churches have not been prolific producers of doctrinal literature, so that Spiritism here appears to be very much what assembly leaders and members mean it to be.

Despite its empirical emphasis and temporal limits, our study seeks to do more than offer an ethnography of Spiritism in a particular Ghanaian community. Our approach to the study of new religious movements must, as Peel has rightly pointed out, be of a somewhat different order from that normally taken in studies of the established religions of tribal African societies.[12] In the latter a systemic analysis of religion and its inter-connections with other

aspects of social structure and culture is appropriate (and usually sufficient), but a causal account is not, for the origins and development of religion in these pre-literate societies are not readily amenable to sociological or historical enquiry; with African religious groups which have emerged mainly in the present century, however, a causal account is not only possible, but indispensable if we are to comprehend their nature and place in society. Since the Effutu Spiritist churches are typically branches of, or offshoots from, bodies which originated elsewhere, any attempt to explain their genesis and growth must involve a widening of our perspective, both spatially and temporally, beyond the purely local situation of the 1960's and 1970's.

As yet there has emerged no universally accepted theoretical perspective in the sociology of new religious movements, a fact which may reflect the varied backgrounds and training of the investigators, as well as the sheer variety of the movements themselves. It is possible, nevertheless, to identify two broad orientations commonly taken or urged by writers in this field and which, for convenience, we may label the *contextualist* and *intellectualist* approaches.

The contextualist approach is characterized by an emphasis upon the socio-cultural situation and, especially, the strains, tensions, or incongruities which result from the meeting of cultures or their representatives. Out of such disruptions the new movements are said to arise: as movements of protest, they may express a sense of deprivation and a demand, couched in the idiom of religion, for a greater share of power, wealth, or social prestige in a situation of rapid and drastic social change; or they may express a sense of *anomie* and seek a return, in the near future, to the stable and ordered world of former times. For some writers who employ the contextualist approach, the root causes of disruption are sought at the level of culture, viewed typically as a normative system which expresses and governs a people's way of life, their world-view and their conception of themselves as a collectivity.[13] At the other end of the spectrum, one might say, are those writers who emphasize the fundamental importance of tension and conflict at the social-structural level, with special reference to the economic and political spheres.[14]

The field of new African religious movements is very far from being the preserve of sociologists and anthropologists, and the contextualist approach has been a source of irritation for writers who have approached the subject from a phenomenological standpoint. A feeling that all the sociologizing in the world can never do justice to the essentially *religious* nature of the phenomenon is obvious in the work of many writers of this kind, but has been stated most openly and forcefully by Turner.[15] The contextualist approach has also met with criticism from writers who feel that it leads to a neglect, or underestimation, of the importance of beliefs and motives, especially those of the religious innovators. In order to remedy this deficiency such writers advocate an intellectualist approach, one which takes as its starting-point the subjective explanations—the intellectual efforts—of the actors involved.[16]

Such an approach, it is suggested, helps us to avoid crude, socially-deterministic explanations of movements whose members are often only small minorities within larger populations.

Despite the vigor with which the merits and superiority of contextualist and intellectualist orientations are proclaimed by their respective proponents, it seems fairly clear that they are complementary, rather than mutually exclusive, approaches. An examination of the actual studies which are supposed to be guided by one particular perspective rather than the other shows the non-exclusive and complementary nature of the approaches in operation.[17] Peel's study, despite an insistence upon the superiority of the intellectualist approach, comes close to making an open acknowledgement of this rather obvious fact:

> The sociology of a new religious movement must start off, then, from the religious motivations, the doctrinal pronouncements of the founders, seen as answers to religious problems. . . . But successful religions spread and persist *after the conditions which gave birth to them* have changed, and individuals are socialized into acceptance of their doctrines.[18] (My italics)

Peel's concern, therefore, is not to plead for the exclusive use of the intellectualist approach and, as the italicized portion of the above quotation indicates, he is well aware of the "conditions" which gave rise to religious innovation among the Yoruba of Nigeria. And it is with an account of these conditions—traditional Yoruba society and religion, social change, and the coming of Islam and Christianity—that his sociology of the Aladura churches begins, and not with a direct probe of the thoughts of the Aladura founders. His advocacy of an intellectualist approach is by no means a demand for a revived form of ideological determinism.

In light of the preceding discussion my own position will now be fairly clear. I regard both the contextualist and intellectualist perspectives as complementary and necessary in an attempt to explain sociologically the origins, development, and present nature of Spiritism among the Effutu. For ease of exposition this sociology begins with an outline of the regional and local conditions within which Effutu Spiritism developed. In the normal course of events, a reminder that my introductory outline represents a highly selective presentation of data would be unnecessary. The field of new African religious movements is, however, a pie with a good many fingers in it and one is conscious of the needs and expectations of fellow-diners. It should be stressed, therefore, that the opening chapter is not intended to provide either a social history of Christianity in Ghana or an ethnography of the Effutu. While attention is paid, in chapter two, to the origins and early development of Spiritism among the Effutu, I have sought to establish a clear baseline from which to examine recent changes by presenting, in chapters three through five, the main features of local Spiritism as it existed in 1967–68. The most important of these recent changes are discussed in chapter six.

Spiritism and Christian Missions

In their attention to healing and spiritual protection the Spiritist churches are concerned with problems which lie at the heart of traditional Ghanaian religions, yet they are also lineal descendants of mission Christianity which employ a particular interpretation of the Christian faith to address these problems in a new way. In Winneba, the Effutu town with which the present study is concerned, the originators and charter members of the local Spiritist churches were typically residents of the town, yet it is clear that the religion they adopted had its social roots in developments prior to 1930 (the year in which the first Spiritist church was founded in Winneba) and which affected a much wider area than that encompassed by the local community. An adequate understanding of local Spiritist beginnings can be attained only if we look beyond the purely local situation which existed when these early Spiritist bodies were being introduced to Winneba.

Although the Christian mission in Ghana dates from the latter part of the 15th century, large-scale conversions were not achieved until the second half of the 19th century. For over three hundred and fifty years missionaries enjoyed only the most precarious of footholds in European coastal forts and settlements, where they tended mainly to the spiritual welfare of members of merchant companies or garrisons and to those Africans directly associated with them. During this long period opportunities for successful missionizing were limited by the unstable political condition of the territory, the tenuous economic relationships existing between the local inhabitants and the merchants (upon whom the missionaries were often dependent for protection and financial support), as well as by the hostile climate of the coast.

It was not until 1835, when the Wesleyan Methodists commenced their work at Cape Coast, and the Basel mission moved its base of operations inland from Christiansborg to the Akwapim ridge, that European missionary activity began its forward march, although even then progress was slow and labored. In 1848, after some twenty years of effort, the Basel mission could claim only forty native Christians, while in 1850 the Methodists had some eight hundred and fifty-seven members scattered in relatively small fellowships throughout Fanti territory.[19] But with the gradual extension of British control in the area, prospects for successful missionizing improved greatly: the removal of rival European powers in 1850 and 1872, [20] the establishment of the Gold Coast as a Crown Colony in 1874, and the conquest and annexation of Ashanti in 1901 made it increasingly possible for missionaries and catechists to move freely about the country and to disseminate their religion in areas from which they had been effectively excluded in the past; the regularizing of trade and commercial relations, which went hand in hand with the imposition of the *Pax Britannica*, also contributed to the spread of mission influence, as Fanti and Akwapim traders, middlemen, and clerks carried Christianity into the interior.

By the close of the century the two major missions could record substantial progress, the Basel mission claiming a Christian community of over 12,000 in 1894, while that of the Methodists was estimated at 7,600 in 1896.[21] Even more striking were the gains registered by these missions during the early part of the present century as the Ashanti region was opened up for evangelization;[22] and this period was also marked by the expansion of Roman Catholic and Anglican missionary work, as well as by the appearance of various sectarian Adventist and Pentecostal missions from the United States and Britain.

The Methodists in Southern Ghana

The dominant mission in the region with which we deal was the Wesleyan Methodist, which enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the mission field in south-central Ghana for almost three-quarters of a century. During this period, however, the stage was being set for the subsequent diversification of the coastal Christian community, a process which included the formation of independent Spiritist churches. The message which the Methodist missionaries brought to the Effutu and adjacent peoples was of a radical and far-reaching nature, amounting to a declaration that traditional religion was unworthy and should be abandoned in favor of a search for grace and personal sanctification. The only redeeming features the missionaries saw in a traditional mass of "superstition" and "idolatry" was the concept of a remote creator god, known variously as *Nyimpo*, *Nyame*, or *Nyankopon* by the local inhabitants, and whom the missionaries regarded as none other than the Christian god dimly perceived by his depraved children.

In turning to this one true God the converts were asked to believe that they were basically sinful and must repent and aspire to spiritual perfection. They were encouraged to believe that offenses such as fornication and adultery, which were normally settled by the payment of compensation to the injured parties, were sins in the eyes of God, as was the traditional ideal of polygyny in marriage. In place of participation, as clients and practitioners, in a localized, ethnic religion, they were offered fellowship in an international church, which regarded itself as an integral part of a universal Christian faith. And in place of a loose collection of myths and beliefs, they were offered the scriptures and a doctrine of grace and sanctification.

As emissaries of God, the missionaries sought to effect the conversion of the population to the universal Christian faith. As representatives of a particular Christian mission, however, they were primarily interested in making Methodists out of the people in their mission territory. We see, therefore, that these Methodist missionaries were compelled, through the denominational pluralism of Christianity and the ethnic and regional pluralism of the colonial society, to operate with a tacit, non-interference understanding with their Basel mission counterparts who had established

themselves in the southeastern parts of the country. The loss of newly-won converts to rival missions was viewed with the same sense of failure as that occasioned by the "backsliding" of local Christians into paganism; and the possibility that rival missions might gain a foothold in their field caused as much anxiety as the possible introduction of a new pagan shrine. These concerns, though always present, remained in the background of Methodist missionary thought during the greater part of the 19th century, while the conventional separation of mission spheres of influence remained intact.

If the missionaries saw clearly that success depended upon their undermining of traditional religion and related institutions, many Africans were not slow to realize that here, in Christianity, was a religion which might be made to serve well in the pursuit of this-worldly interests. The efforts of the early converts to "operationalize" Methodism seem to have been conducted at two different levels and by two different, though not entirely unrelated, social groups. For those most firmly tied to the old social order (i.e., the illiterate farmers and fishermen) Methodism was scanned for what it might offer in the way of added *spiritual* power and protection in everyday undertakings; here a certain amount of "analogical thinking," in which Methodism was regarded as a potential source of the European's power and success, may have been at work.[23] For those who were at least partially uprooted from the old order (i.e., the literate and semi-literate artisans, the emerging commercial group, and certain members of the old elite) fellowship in the Methodist church was seen to confer practical opportunities for social, economic, and political advancement; here the thinking involved a fairly realistic assessment of the this-worldly benefits to be derived from association with "the white man's religion." At both levels the operationalizing of Methodism was greatly facilitated by the missionaries' efforts in promoting literacy and education.

By 1895 the Methodists had produced the New Testament in the Fanti language and this meant that a significant portion of the scriptures was now available in a form readily accessible for a large number of people. This made possible a major breakthrough—the independent evaluation of Methodist doctrine and practice by converts and others. For many, direct access to the scriptures seemed to suggest that Methodist doctrine was based upon a far from literal view of the Bible and was strangely silent on such matters as spiritual healing, speaking-with-tongues, and other dramatic forms of Pentecostalism. The Fanti New Testament thus became a source of legitimation for the thaumaturgical activities of the Spiritist prophets who appeared early in the century, many of whom had been catechists or members in the Methodist mission.

The Methodists had been relatively late in devoting attention to vernacular studies, having operated with the assumption that English would naturally come to supercede the local language.[24] By 1856 there were some thirty-one Methodist schools in the country, with a total of 1229 pupils receiving instruction through the medium of the English language.[25] But the

consequences of their educational activity went well beyond anything that the missionaries had intended. In preparing a class of Christians who were literate in English, the missionaries unwittingly satisfied one of the preconditions for the establishment of American Fundamentalism, especially in its Adventist form, toward the turn of the century.[26] As well as helping to provide charter members for these American-based sects, the Methodist schools also trained numbers of people who were qualified to work as clerks in various government departments, or as storekeepers in the European-owned trading establishments. These persons were often required to take up residence outside their home areas, in places which had been regarded as the preserves of other missions. In the coastal areas worked by the Methodists, similar incursions were experienced as Basel, Anglican, and Roman Catholic congregations of immigrant clerks, traders, professional, and government workers appeared and were formally incorporated within the pastoral systems of their respective churches. The geographical mobility of these categories of workers, fostered by the major missions' educational programs, and enhanced by the conquest of Ashanti and the growth of the cocoa industry, did much to break down the old territorial monopolies of the missions.

In the early history of the A.M.E.Zion church in Ghana we see clearly the price the Methodist mission had to pay for its success in training and educating an indigenous ministry within the context of a British-controlled organization.[27] Equipped with a western education and taking seriously the egalitarian philosophy propounded by their missionary teachers, it was hardly surprising that indigenous Methodist ministers would spearhead the revolt against foreign control in both the mission and the country at large. As a religious expression of nationalism, the A.M.E.Zion church in large measure satisfied the demand for a "black man's church" as expressed by the more articulate and politically conscious Africans. But neither it, nor any of the other Christian bodies operating in Ghana in the early part of the 20th century, addressed itself to the needs of those who found that mission Christianity was unable to help them cope with those personal and family crises which were manifested most alarmingly in cases of serious illness.

The A.M.E.Zion secession and the growing visibility of Christian pluralism at the local level may, however, have formed a paradigmatic experience for those who were later to initiate the founding of Spiritist assemblies. For seventy years Methodism and Christianity were synonymous for most residents of Winneba, but after the 1908 introduction of the A.M.E.Zion congregation and the subsequent creation of First Century Gospel, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Seventh-Day Adventist groups in the 1920's this picture was drastically altered. It was only after this had taken place that the first Spiritist churches were formed in Winneba and in their creation, as in that of First Century Gospel and the Seventh-Day Adventist church, former members of the Methodist and A.M.E.Zion congregations—the original warring parties—played prominent roles.

Winneba: the Town and the People

The town of Winneba lies at the edge of a wide bay on the Gulf of Guinea, some forty miles west of Accra and fifty miles east of Cape Coast. The bay is noted for the strong winds which gust over it from the southwest throughout much of the year and was called "Windy Bay" by the early English sailors. The term was also applied to the small fishing village of Simpa and, in contracted form, became the official name of the town which grew up on the site of the old village. Winneba is the capital of the Effutu traditional state, or *Oman*, and is the seat of the paramount chief (*Omanhene*) of the Effutu people. According to the 1970 census, the population of Winneba District (an area corresponding roughly with that of the Effutu *Oman*) was 34,747, some 30,800 of whom resided in Winneba town and the remainder in surrounding hamlets.[28] By 1977, at the close of the period of study, the population of the town was probably about 36,000, with an additional 4,500 living in other parts of the District.[29]

The major tribe in the state is the Effutu, who speak a dialect of the Guan language.[30] Oral traditions point to a migration of Effutu from the north and speak of a war with the indigenous Atsiis who occupied the land on which Winneba now stands. Of the social organization of the Effutu settlers nothing is known. Surrounded by Twi-speaking Akan peoples they were probably subject to acculturative influences from their neighbors at an early period in their history. Today their culture and social institutions are closely similar to those of the neighboring Fanti to the west. The Guan dialect is still spoken but tends to be reserved for private conversation within the home, while Fanti-Twi has become the language of the marketplace, as well as of the church. The erosion of Guan in Winneba has no doubt been hastened by the reduction of Twi to writing and by the translation of the Bible into the Fanti-Twi dialect. Despite (or perhaps because of) these developments, most Effutu are fiercely insistent on the subject of their separate, non-Akan identity.

An important feature of traditional Effutu social organization is the operation of the principle of double descent. This means that both matrilineal and patrilineal descent are recognized in assigning individuals to two different kinds of descent groups. Each Effutu is a member of a matrilineage (*Nniani*), which consists of a number of persons who trace descent from a common ancestress, usually some seven or eight generations distant. Several such matrilineages together comprise the clan (*Abusua*), members of which claim descent from a common, remote ancestress, observe certain taboos on the eating or harming of a particular species of animal, bird, fish, etc., and are encouraged to practice clan exogamy in the selection of marriage partners (polygyny being the traditional ideal, though attained only by a relatively few, wealthy men). There are five such clans among the Effutu and these bear names which are similar to, and in some cases identical with, the names of the Akan clans.[31]

Paralleling the matrilineage is the *Iseani*, a patrilineal descent group whose members trace descent from a common ancestor. The largest of these patrilineages are identified with particular wards or districts of the town and the traditional rule of patrilocal residence after marriage has fostered a degree of localization of these groups, although rights to land are still vested in the matrilineage. Patrilinearity also governs entry to the *Asafo* (commonly referred to as the "company"), of which there are two in Winneba. Traditionally groups of young male warriors charged with the defense of the state against external threats, the *Asafo* companies still occupy an important place in the social and political life of the people. They are major vehicles through which the residents of Winneba are mobilized for various communal tasks and it is through the *Asafo* companies that a paramount chief may be elected or deposed.

At the head of the traditional political system is the *Omanhene* (sometimes referred to by the Guan title, *Oma-Odefey*) whose position has been the center of many serious and bitter succession disputes. At the heart of these disputes is the question of whether succession to the royal stool (throne) should follow the patrilineal or matrilineal principles, with two powerful rival families regularly contesting the issue by nominating different candidates each time the stool falls vacant. Supporting the patrilineal principle and emphasizing the uniqueness of the Effutu as a Guan people is the Ghartey family, which can point to an unbroken pattern of patrilineal succession to the stool up to the year 1859. Urging the matrilineal principle is the Acquah family, which claims that the Effutu constituted the first wave of Akan settlers on the coast and can point to three cases of matrilineal succession to the stool between 1859 and the present.

Assisting the *Omanhene* in his unenviable political tasks is a council of advisers and here too dissension and confusion are rife. The Gharteys insist that the council rightly includes only those representatives nominated by the *Asafo* companies, while the Acquahs argue that the traditional Akan model should be followed and that council members should be chosen from among the divisional chiefs (i.e., commanders of traditional army divisions, together with the chiefs of the larger hamlets). In practice Effutu traditional politics is managed through a series of *ad hoc* arrangements and compromises which reflect the shifting balance of power and influence between the two great families, the clans, and the *Asafo* companies, as well as the arbitration efforts of various government-appointed commissions.

Sea fishing remains the basis of the local economy, most of this being conducted from dug-out canoes capable of carrying between fifteen and twenty men. In recent years, however, a fleet of motorized fishing vessels has been built up, most of these being owned by Ghanaians who are not residents of Winneba. On the plains around the town there is small-scale farming which yields crops of cassava, peppers, and vegetables; most farmers also keep some livestock including goats, pigs, and chickens. Fish and agricultural produce

are marketed primarily in the town, where there is a large, central market. Some is taken for sale to the small village markets in the surrounding area and to the very busy market at the Winneba Junction, which lies some three miles to the north on the main Accra-Takoradi coastal highway.

Toward the end of the 19th century there began the rapid growth of cocoa production in Ghana, and Winneba was one of the towns which provided storage and loading facilities for this commodity. But with the development of modern harbors at Takoradi to the west and Tema to the east, the town's importance as a port suffered greatly, and eventually the customs house and lighterage offices were closed down. There has been little industrial development in recent years, apart from the building of a ceramics factory in 1976, and most local artisans and laborers are to be found working for the Public Works Department or for the larger educational institutions such as the Advanced Teacher Training College.

The solidarity of many traditional social groupings has undoubtedly been impaired in the course of Winneba's growth and urbanization. Families and kin-groups are no longer always intact as cohesive, corporate bodies and seem less able than before to exercise many of their traditional functions. Many new associations have arisen, including a number of mutual-aid societies such as "Honesty," "Hope," and "*Ankoranko Abusua*" ("One by One Family"), which operate as surrogate kin groups and attend to many matters formerly dealt with by traditional agencies; in addition to these are several church-based societies such as the Methodist Youth Fellowship and the Y.M.C.A., as well as fraternal clubs like the Freemasons, Foresters, Oddfellows, and the Knights of Marshall.

New forms of recreational and leisure time activities have emerged, the organization of which owes little to traditional mobilizing agencies. There is a cinema which is privately-owned, four open-air dance halls (three with bars) and some twenty-three bars which bear such intriguing titles as "Christmas in Egypt," "Top Way Bar," "Money Bar," "Believers' Inn" and "Lovely Inn." At least twice weekly there is a major dance held somewhere in Winneba, often featuring a visiting band from Accra. On these occasions a pseudo-American atmosphere prevails (a noticeable trend over the past ten years or so), with "soul" music being played as often as the once dominant "highlife," and with the master of ceremonies parodying the linguistic style of a North American "disc-jockey." The most popular organized sport in Winneba is association football (soccer); and, although the town does not have a team represented in the national league, it does have a thriving minor league which is well patronized.

A major force for change in the community has been the growth of a modern system of public education. The Winneba District now has some forty Primary and Middle schools, twenty-eight of which are managed by one or another of the orthodox religious denominations.[32] There are four vocational schools, two of these being run by religious organizations, and a Day Care

Center which is managed by the local educational authority. The higher educational institutions—Winneba Secondary School, National Academy of Music, Specialist Teacher Training College, and Advanced Teacher Training College— are all government-run establishments.

The development of modern medical facilities has been less spectacular than that of public education; and the government hospital, which was opened in 1929, is due to be superceded by a new facility which is already under construction just north of the town. Between 1964 and 1977 three small, private clinics were established in Winneba, but these appear to have done little to alleviate the problems of overcrowding in the hospital and the long periods of waiting to be endured by out-patients. In addition to the hospital pharmacy, there are two small stores in town which sell patent medicines and pharmaceutical supplies, while some of the more familiar brands of headache pills and anti-malarial drugs are sold by women petty traders at the market and on the street corners.[33]

At the head of the modern political system of Winneba is the District Chief Executive Officer, successor to the old District Commissioner's office, who is appointed by the central government and is directly responsible to the Regional Chief Executive Officer (formerly Regional Commissioner) in Cape Coast. The D.C.E.O. is senior member of the Winneba District Council, which includes a number of appointed specialists, such as the senior Medical Officer, the Senior Education Officer and the Senior Engineer, together with some ten prominent citizens, appointed by the D.C.E.O., who act as a Town Development Committee within the Council. Nowadays the town is not as prominent in national politics as it was during the Nkrumah regime, when the local Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute provided training courses for party activists and was a "showplace" to which the late President regularly brought visiting V.I.P.s.[34]

Effutu Religion

Despite the belief in a remote creator god known as *Nyimpo*, Effutu traditional religion is essentially polytheistic. Its various components are not tightly bound together by an authoritative theology expounded and defended by an organized group of religious experts, but are integrated in a somewhat loose and tenuous fashion. The absence of an official orthodoxy has enabled Effutu religion to be relatively open, flexible, and experimental, and although it is an ethnic, localized religion, it has been able to absorb elements from outside the local culture. Moreover, a challenge to any one part of this religious system does not necessarily call into question the system as a whole; a certain weakening of the ancestral cult has been partly offset by recourse to protective, anti-witchcraft beliefs and practices; and doubts about the efficacy of certain gods in the past appears to have led sometimes to their abandonment and replacement by other gods, or to a heightened interest in divination, charms, and talismans. In speaking of Effutu "traditional"

religion, therefore, we are dealing with a body of beliefs and practices which has not remained static over the centuries, but which has been subject to modification and development.

This traditional religion of the Effutu is not directly geared to the spiritual or moral improvement of man or society, nor is it concerned with the problem of salvation in terms of the search for a place in a perfect world after death. It is, rather, a vitalistic, thaumaturgical religion which is aimed squarely at man's mundane interests. Through it the Effutu seek protection from misfortune and calamity, as well as the attainment of health, happiness, peace, prosperity, and success in everyday undertakings. It offers the means whereby man may seek fulfillment of what Baëta calls the "basic human aspiration" in traditional Ghanaian society: "to obtain, preserve and increase what has been called 'life force': potency, vitality, elan; more vigorous, pulsating, prolific life."[35]

Despite some slight differences in nomenclature, Effutu religion closely resembles that of the Akan peoples. Like the Akan, the Effutu believe that each person is made of three major elements, or possesses three distinctive attributes: the blood (*nkra* or *dase*), which comes from one's father;[36] the spirit (*sunsum*), which is also received from one's father; and the soul (*kra*), which is a gift from the creator god *Nyimpo*. A person's spirit is held to be responsible for determining his character or temperament, but is malleable and capable of modification during his lifetime. The soul, however, is a fixed and unchangeable element which contains within it a person's appointed destiny. When a person dies, his soul is reclaimed by the creator god.

At death a person's spirit departs from the body and goes to the world of the ancestors, where it assumes the form of an ancestral spirit. Mortuary rites among the Effutu are primarily concerned with ensuring the spirit a safe and comfortable journey to the world of the ancestors, no expense being spared in this effort, since it is felt that a spirit may be tempted to linger awhile to vent its displeasure on those who did not give it a fitting send-off. Once they have completed their journey the ancestors are thought to be constantly watching over the living, holding them accountable for their actions. They are quick to punish those who violate traditional customs, or who fail to meet their obligations to family and kin; but sometimes they act capriciously or malevolently, just as they did when they walked the earth, so that their actions are not always predictable or just.

The creator god *Nyimpo* has no shrine and no attendant priests, but he may be approached indirectly through members of the Effutu pantheon of lesser gods (*Abosom*, sing. *Obosom*), traditionally said to number seventy-seven, although even the most knowledgeable Effutu informants cannot offer a complete list of the names of these gods. Of the seventy-four names collected (and some of these may be alternate names for particular gods), thirty-seven can be linked to gods which have shrines and priests. Of these "active" gods, sixteen are tutelary deities of the *Asafo* companies and are perceived as male

gods; twenty-one are independent of the *Asafo* system; and, of these, twelve are regarded as males and nine as females. Each is thought to reside in a natural object, such as a tree, rock, river, lagoon, or the sea, but their traditional meeting-place is *Abosomba* in the center of the town and it is here that they congregate when important affairs have to be conducted.

Those gods which are still propitiated have shrines built around or near their abodes and are cared for by their priests. When a god's aid is solicited, the client is required to make some offering which is specified by the priest, after the latter has consulted with the god itself. The priests who attend the gods are of two types: the *Osofo* (plural *Asofo*) is a servant of the god who pours libations to it, attends to any sacrifices made to it, offers prayers on behalf of petitioners, and sees that its shrine is well cared for; the *Okomfo* (plural *Akomfo*) is much closer to the god and is sometimes referred to as its "wife"—only an *Okomfo* may speak directly with the god and only he may be possessed by it. Marriage is not a bar to the priesthood and both men and women may become *Asofo* or *Akomfo*. A person usually becomes an *Osofo* by inheriting the position from his father; an *Okomfo* may also assume his position in this way, but only if he has been possessed by the god in question.

Not all communication between a god and its *Okomfo* takes place through possession. Each *Okomfo* uses an *akor*, an earthenware pot which is filled with water and secret ingredients, as a device for "seeing" the god. Peering into the *akor*, the *Okomfo* sees the god and is able to question it on behalf of his client, thus obtaining information relating to past, present, or future events. This enables him to act as a diviner, warning clients of impending dangers and misfortunes. With its aid he can also act as a healer, using the *akor* to identify the spiritual source of a client's ailment and to prescribe the appropriate remedies. These remedies will include not only offerings and libations to the god, but also protective and curative medicines prepared by the *Okomfo*.

Effutu traditional healers, whether *Akomfo* or herbalists who are not attached to particular gods, recognize a basic distinction between diseases which are naturally caused (*Nkratodobi*) and those which are caused spiritually (*Sunsumtodobi*), but this does not imply a fixed system of disease classification.[37] It merely indicates an awareness that any specific occurrence of a disease may be due *either* to natural causes *or* to spiritual causes. One person's stomach pains may have been caused by eating bad food, while another's may have been caused by witchcraft. The probability that spiritual forces underlie a specific complaint increases if the ailment does not respond to traditional physical remedies.

Witchcraft is the most frequently cited spiritual cause of disease and the belief in witchcraft is quite widespread in Effutu society, although specific accusations against supposed witches are seldom heard.[38] A person who is a witch (*Ogyapafo*) may have inherited the witch-power or witch-spirit (*Ogyapa*, literally "the fire within") from his father or mother, or may have

been taken hold of by such a spirit later in life. It is felt that witches are most active at night, when the witch-spirit leaves the body during sleep and that most witches have little control over their actions and actually wish to be rid of their evil powers. The involuntary nature of most Effutu witchcraft makes self-accusation and confession—the principal modes of drawing attention to witchcraft activity among the Effutu—less shameful and personally damaging than might otherwise be the case.

A person who feels himself bewitched may seek the protection of an *Okomfo*, who can prescribe anti-witchcraft medicine after consulting the god he serves. Some gods are thought to be particularly adept at seeking out and seizing witches, forcing them to come to their shrines and make a public confession of their activities. Among the best known of these gods is *Tigare*, whose cult emerged first in the northern part of the Ivory Coast during the early part of the present century, reaching the coastal areas of Ghana around 1946.[39] In 1968 Winneba had two branches of this cult, but by 1977 one of these had become defunct, and nowadays "bewitched" persons and self-accusing witches are more often to be found attending the Spiritist churches, where the "Holy Spirit" is felt to provide protection and the possibility of exorcism. The treatment of self-accusing witches, whether at traditional shrine, *Tigare* cult, or Spiritist church, is often a lengthy process, with confessions taking several visits to complete and particularly serious cases involving the "witch" in a period of residence at shrine, cult, or church.

The traditional religious life of the people of Winneba is punctuated by a number of public festivals, most of which are organized by the residents of particular districts of the town. The *Aboakyer* (literally "the catching of an animal") is the major communal ritual of the Effutu and ranks as one of the most popular festivals in southern Ghana.[40] Each April Winneba is the center of national interest and host to thousands of visitors who come to witness the spectacle. The highlight of the event is the hunting contest between the two *Asafo* companies, each of which attempts to catch a deer as an offering to the gods. This takes place on a Saturday morning and is followed, in the afternoon, by a grand parade of the companies and the *Omanhene* through the streets of the town. On Sunday the ritual is concluded with the *Ebisatsir* (literally "seeing into the future"), when the god *Penkye Otu* (who is said to have accompanied the Effutu on their migration from the north) reveals what is in store for the people in the year that lies ahead.

For nearly fifty years Effutu traditional religion has had to face the competitive challenge of Spiritism and, for a much longer period, that of orthodox Christianity, as well as the effects of various economic, political, and social changes which have taken place in the community. We find that great communal rituals like the *Aboakyer*, which lend themselves fairly readily to commercialization and assume many aspects of the mass spectacle, appear to have adapted quite well to these changing conditions, but other elements of the old religion have not fared so well. The cult of the ancestral

spirits has been attcked by all the Christian churches in the town; and the lineage structure, which is its social foundation, has been impaired by developments in public education, by the urbanization of the community, and by the increased geographical mobility of the population. Many of the old gods appear to have been forgotten and are now mere names from the past, remembered by only a few old men, and are devoid of shrines, priests, and devotees. Experts in the traditional arts of healing, divining, and witch-finding have lost clients to the Spiritist churches and to modern medical practitioners. In 1963 a local branch of the Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healing Association was formed under the auspices of the ruling Convention People's Party and this brought together all kinds of traditional religious and medical practitioners in the community, but the organization went into decline after the 1966 coup which deposed Nkrumah and by 1970 it had ceased to function. Since 1960 the District Council has attempted to regulate the activities of the various traditional healers through the issuance of licenses, which must be renewed annually. Between 1960 and 1976 there was a 34.5% decline in the number of such licensed healers in the district.

All this might suggest that the long day of Effutu religion is rapidly drawing to a close, yet it would be premature, at this time, to speak of a "twilight of the gods." The ancestors have not yet been totally forgotten and traditional religious practitioners are not yet prepared to vacate the field in favor of the Christian churches, whose members, after all, represent only a minority of Effutu. The number of "active" gods may have dwindled, but those which are consulted and propitiated are widely known and seriously regarded by most townspeople. And while the *Aboakyer* may require the props of carnival and commercialization for its continued existence, it is nonetheless the case that, amid the glare of publicity and the welter of commercial activity, the old rites are still performed and *Penkye Otu* still speaks of the future.

Notes for Chapter One

[1]C. G. Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, S.C.M. Press, London, 1962.

[2]D. M. Beckmann, *Eden Revival*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1975.

[3]For example, K. A. Opoku, "Traditional Religious Beliefs and the Spiritual Churches in Ghana: a Preliminary Statement," *Research Review*, Legon, vol. 5, 1968, pp. 47–60; "The Universal Prayer Group 'Mpaebokow': the Call of the Prophet," *Research Review*, Legon, vol. 5, 1968, pp. 101–7; "Kingdom: a Religious Community," *Research Review*, Legon, vol. 6, 1969 pp. 66–69.

[4]P. S. Breidenbach, "Spatial Juxtapositions and Belief Orientations in a Ritual of a Ghanaian Healing Movement," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 7, 1975, pp. 92–110; "Colour Symbolism and Ideology in a Ghanaian Healing Movement," *Africa*, vol. 46, 1976, pp. 137–45.

[5]For example, K. A. Busia, *Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi*, Crown Agents for the Colonies, London, 1950; I. Acquah, *Accra Survey*, University of London Press, London, 1948; and D. Brokensha, *Social Change at Larteh, Ghana*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1969.

[6]These rely heavily on Baëta's account: examples are S. G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith*, Ghana Universities Press, Accra, 1965; N. Smith, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1835–1960*, Ghana Universities Press, Accra, 1966.

[7]J. W. Fernandez, "Rededication and Prophetism in Ghana," *Cahiers D'Etudes Africaines*, vol. 10, 1970, pp. 228–305.

[8]J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968; H. W. Turner, *African Independent Church* (2 vols.), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967.

[9]B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1961.

[10]Peel, ibid.

[11]Turner, ibid.

[12]Peel, ibid.

[13]For example, R. Linton, "Nativistic Movements," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 45, 1943, pp. 230–40; A. F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements: Some Theoretical Considerations for their Comparative Study," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 58, 1956, pp. 264–81. For modern African religious movements a similar emphasis is evident in the work of Fernandez; e.g., J. W. Fernandez, "Christian Acculturation and Fang Witchcraft," *Cahiers D'Etudes Africaines*, vol. 2, 1961, pp. 244–55; "The Idea and Symbol of the Saviour in a Gabon Syncretistic Cult," *International Review of Missions*, vol. 53, 1964, pp. 281–89; "African Religious Movements—Types and Dynamics," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 2, 1964 pp. 531–49; "Symbolic Consensus in a Fang Reformative Cult,"*American Anthropologist*, vol. 67, 1965, pp. 902–29; *Microcosmogeny and Modernization in African Religious Movements*, Occasional Papers Series, no. 3, McGill Centre for Developing Area Studies, Montreal, 1969.

[14]For example, P. Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo Cults' in Melanesia*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1957; V. Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed* (trans. L. Sergio), Knopf, New York, 1963; G. Balandier, *Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique noire*, Presses universitaires, Paris, 1955.

[15]Especially in his "A Methodology for Modern African Religious Movements," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 8, 1965–66, pp. 281–94.

[16]For example, I. C. Jarvie, *The Revolution in Anthropology*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964; Peel, ibid.; R. Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa*, vol. 41, 1971, pp. 85–106; "On the Rationality of Conversion," *Africa*, vol. 45, 1975, pp. 219–53 and 373–99. Horton's intellectualist theory has been criticized by H. Fisher, "Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa," *Africa*, vol. 43, 1973, pp. 27–40; and by G. Ifeka-Moller, "White Power: Social Structural Factors in Conversion to Christianity, Eastern Nigeria, 1921–1966," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 8, 1974, pp. 55–72.

[17]While claiming a special role for theology and comparative religion in revealing the religious essence of the movements, even phenomenologists such as Turner recognize quite clearly, if somewhat reluctantly, the value of both contextualist and intellectualist approaches to the subject.

[18]Peel, ibid., pp. 14–15.

[19]Williamson, ibid., p. 9.

[20]These were the Danes and the Dutch.

[21]Williamson, ibid., pp. 9–10.

[22]Smith, ibid., p. 222n. shows that the number of communicants in the Ashanti Presbytery of the Basel mission increased from 822 in 1918 to 3,498 in 1930; F. L. Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1965, p. 188, notes that the "spiritual revival" in Ashanti between 1921 and 1922, which saw the number of Methodist mission stations increase from nine to seventy-two, coincided with a trade revival and remarks upon the "amazing generosity" of the new Ashanti converts.

[23]Peel, ibid., p. 290, suggests the operaton of "vague analogical thinking" on the part of early Yoruba converts to the Christian missions.

[24]Williamson, ibid., p. 71.

[25]Bartels, ibid., p. 351.

[26]These bodies made their initial appeals through published tracts, pamphlets, and magazines.

[27]The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, an American Negro church, was formed in Ghana in 1898 by dissident African ministers of the Methodist mission. Many of these men were also active in the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, an early nationalist movement which emerged at about the same time.

[28]*1970 Population Census of Ghana*, vol. 2, Census Office, Accra, 1972, p. 150.

[29]Estimate provided by the office of the Winneba District Chief Executive Officer.

[30]Other Guan-speaking peoples are the Awutu, Kyerepon, Larte, Anumboso, Nkonya, Krachi, Atwodi, Ntwumuru, Gonja, and Guan.

[31]The Effutu clans are: Twidan, Anana, Aboradze, Kona, and Nsona.

[32]The Methodist and Roman Catholic churches each manage eight schools; A.M.E.Zion has six, the Anglicans four, and the Presbyterians two.

[33]The main source of street-corner drug supplies appears to be hospital out-patients who may sometimes sell all or part of their prescribed medicines to petty-traders.

[34]After the 1966 coup the Institute was converted into the Advanced Teacher Training College.

[35]Baëta, ibid., p. 135.

[36]Among the Akan peoples the blood (*mogya*) is held to come from the mother.

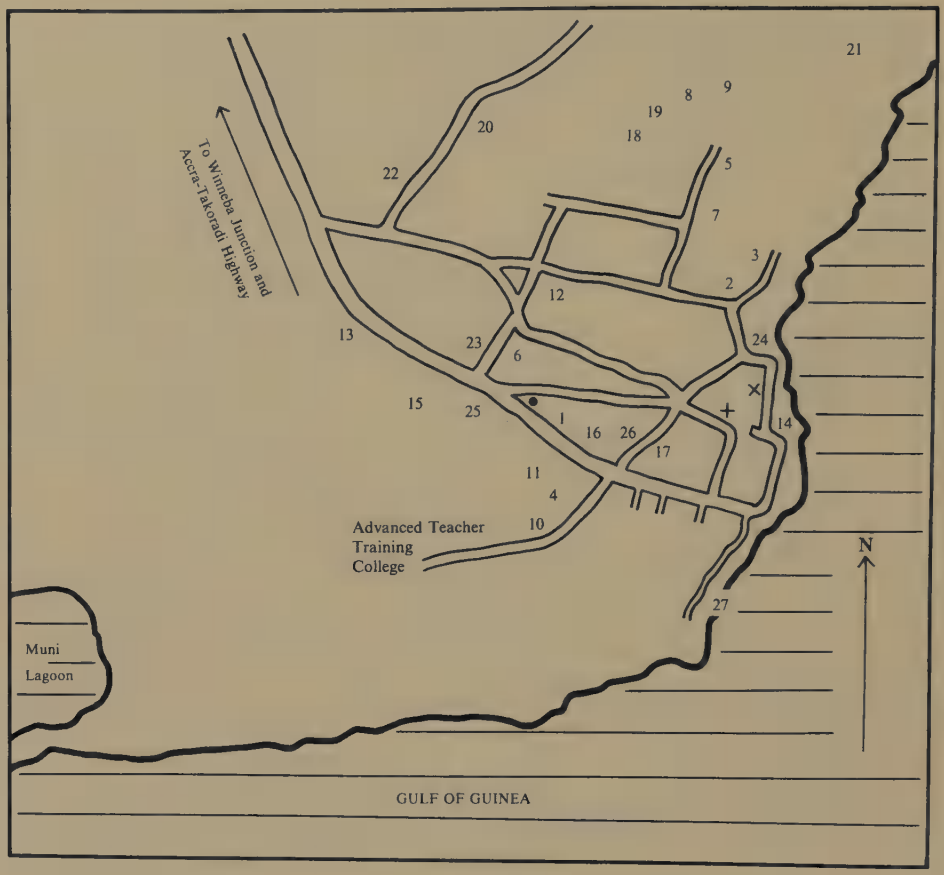
[37]In this respect the Effutu view appears to differ from that obtaining in at least one Akan society, the Bono, whose fixed system of disease classification is discussed in D. M. Warren, "Bono Traditional Healers," *Rural Africana*, no. 17, 1972, pp. 25–39.

[38]On this see R. W. Wyllie, "Introspective Witchcraft among the Effutu of Southern Ghana," *Man*, vol. 8, 1973, pp. 74–79.

[39]J. B. Christensen, "The Tigare Cult of West Africa," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, vol. 39, 1954, pp. 389–98.

[40]This ritual is described more fully in R. W. Wyllie, "Ritual and Social Change: A Ghanaian Example," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 70, 1968, pp. 21–33.

MAP 2. WINNEBA, SHOWING LOCATION OF CHURCHES IN 1968.



KEY:

1 Methodist Church
2 A.M.E.Zion Church
3 First Century Gospel Church
4 Anglican Church
5 Roman Catholic Church
6 Seventh-Day Adventist Church
7 M.D.C.C.
8 St. Anthony Healing Power Church
9 Twelve Apostles
10 Apostolic Church
11 Christ Apostolic Church
12 Jehovah's Witnesses
13 Presbyterian Church
14 Church of Pentecost
15 Church of the Lord Aladura
16 Cherubim and Seraphim
17 Divine Healer's Church
18 African Faith Tabernacle
19 Life and Salvation Church
20 Christ Divine Healing Church
21 Dugan's Church
22 Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple
23 Divine Healing Church
24 Waternakaba
25 Christian Church
26 Christ Revival Church
27 Redeemer Church of God
● Abosomba
+ Freeman Memorial Chapel
× Grove of Penkye Otu

II

ORIGINS AND GROWTH: 1930–1968

The Introduction of Spiritism in Winneba

In the summer of 1930 an Effutu carpenter named Kweku Gyansa wrestled with a very difficult problem. His twelve-year-old son Kofi had been ailing for some three years and now appeared to be weakening daily, despite repeated visits to doctors in Winneba and Accra. In desperation he had even resorted to traditional healers, a course of action which caused him to feel somewhat guilty and ashamed, since he had been a member of the local Methodist church for a good many years. The traditional healers had failed to cure his son and now, almost at his wit's end, he grasped at a final possibility. An old friend advised him to take Kofi to Prophet Jehu-Appiah, the founder and head of the Musama Disco Christo Church at Mozano, a village a few miles north of Winneba. The boy was restored to health at the hands of the Prophet and his father immediately set about the business of organizing a branch of the M.D.C.C. in his home town, so that others might share in the blessings he had received. In this way, quietly and almost unnoticed, Spiritism was introduced to Winneba and the local Christian community could never be the same again.

The introduction of the M.D.C.C. in Winneba followed a pattern which, with minor variations, had occurred elsewhere in the country and was to be repeated more than once in the subsequent proliferation of Spiritist churches in the town. It pointed to a lack of confidence on the part of men like Gyansa in the traditional healers and western-trained doctors; it also reflected a sense of disenchantment with orthodox, mission Christianity, which seemed incapable of offering practical solutions to the kinds of problems which quite ordinary persons could expect to face at any time. In examining the origins and development of the local Spiritist churches, therefore, it is necessary to look first at those churches from which the Spiritists turned away, or which they found lacking in various ways. Moreover, while the emergence of Spiritism represented something new in the history of the Christian community in Winneba, it may also be viewed as part of an on-going process of religious differentiation which has seen that community transformed from a single mission in 1838 to some twenty-seven churches by 1968.

Non-Spiritist Faiths in Winneba

a) *Denominations* (Methodist, A.M.E.Zion, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian): The beginnings of organized Christianity in the town may be traced to the year 1838, when William de Graft, a mulatto from Cape Coast, arrived to work on behalf of the Wesleyan Methodists. For a period of seventy years the Methodists were to be the only Christian body with a congregation in Winneba and they were, in 1968, the largest and most prestigious church in the community. Winneba was one of the earliest centers of Methodism in the country, a small group of resident Fanti traders having held regular meetings since 1837 at the home of one of their number, a man named Acquah Otu. It was this group that de Graft organized as a Methodist congregation in 1838.

The A.M.E.Zion church was introduced to Winneba in 1908 at the time when F.A.O. Pinanko was leading this body in the country. A number of Fanti residents of the town, who had been members of A.M.E.Zion in Cape Coast, invited Pinanko to inaugurate a branch of the church in Winneba and this began with about thirty foundation members, including some disaffected local Methodists. In 1923 an Anglican congregation was formed on the initiatives of I. B. Nelson, a local barrister and William Awono-Renner, a district magistrate. At its inception the congregation consisted of about twenty-five persons, most of whom were Fanti civil servants who had been members of the Anglican Christ Church in Cape Coast.

The first Roman Catholic baptisms in Winneba took place in May 1924, mostly involving the children of Fanti and Ga business and professional men resident in the town. In October of 1925 Father Baumann, the resident priest at Saltpond, visited the Catholic community of Winneba and conducted mass in a hall near the beach. From this time onward Winneba's Roman Catholics were visited regularly by priests stationed in Accra, Saltpond, and Cape Coast, until Winneba itself became a residence in 1936. The Presbyterian church in Winneba came into being in 1944 through the initiatives of Ga and Akwapim Presbyterians, most of whom were employed as clerks in the United Trading Company or as medical assistants in the local hospital.

In general the major denominations represented in Winneba have tended to maintain the orthodox traditions of their missionary forebears. The Roman Catholic church in Winneba is an integral part of a world order and, as such, its doctrines and teachings are in no way different from those of European Catholicism. The Protestant denominations, despite the attainment of national autonomy, have retained the doctrinal heritage and much of the ethos of those missionary bodies from which they sprang. The basic tenets of world-wide Catholicism, Methodism, Anglicanism, and Presbyterianism are still largely adhered to in Winneba. It should be observed, however, that the Presbyterian church, while organized on the Scottish model, has sought to retain the evangelical pietism of the Basel mission and finds a large area of

common ground with the Methodist church.[1] And while the A.M.E.Zion church is episcopalian in organization, its doctrines and teachings are patently Methodist and do not differ in essentials from those of the Methodist church.

While all the denominations in town make use of the Fanti language during services, this does little to counteract the predominantly western ethos which prevails during worship. Although English hymnals are used on occasion, most hymns are sung in Fanti or Twi. Each has its choir, resplendent in robes and caps, which tends to specialize in non-vernacular renditions and whose members are all literates. The more humble counterpart of the choir is the "Singing Band," which consists mainly of illiterates who specialize in the singing of African lyrics (*Ebibindwom*). The singing of *Ebibindwom* is as far as most of these bodies have gone in accommodating African modes of musical expression: there is no drumming and dancing, no hand-clapping and no use is made of such traditional instruments as the *akasaa* (gourd rattle) or *nfatsewa* (a finger instrument, made of metal and used like a castanet).

The subdued and restrained behavior of the congregation is, perhaps, the most striking feature of worship in these denominations, especially when this is contrasted with the spontaneity and mobility of worshippers in the Spiritist and Pentecostal assemblies. Members of the congregation are given little opportunity to leave their pews, so that they often appear to act as recipients, rather than participants, in church services. When collections are taken during services the plates or bowls are brought to where they sit, borne by elders or leaders in a quietly systematic fashion. Members of the congregation are neither expected nor encouraged to interrupt the sermon with cries of approval or joy, in the manner so common in services of Spiritist and Pentecostal assemblies.

b) *American Sects* (First Century Gospel, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists): In 1921 a branch of Pastor Clark's Philadelphia-based Faith Tabernacle was formed in Winneba by Josephus G. Sam, a bookkeeper with Elder Dempster Steamship Company and a native of the town. Sam gathered about him some seventeen persons, most of whom were, like himself, former members of the Methodist church. When Pastor Clark was expelled from his group in 1926 on a charge of adultery and formed his new First Century Gospel Church, his followers in Winneba remained loyal to him and re-named their branch accordingly. At the present time the First Century Gospel assembly in Winneba is led by J. K. Ampah-Sam, a licensed letter-writer and son of the former leader.

American Adventism made its appearance in town in 1925, due largely to the efforts of a native of Sierra Leone named A. K. Doherty. A former member of the Methodist and A.M.E.Zion churches, Doherty became interested in Seventh-Day Adventist teachings after coming into possession of some Adventist tracts and magazines. These formed the basis of discussions held by Doherty and a small group of companions, most of whom were

members of the Methodist or A.M.E.Zion congregations and it was this group which became the local S.D.A. branch in 1925. The Jehovah's Witnesses congregation dates from 1942 and was organized by I. D. Anaman, a member of the Agona tribe from the village of Kwanyako. Anaman worked as a clerk with the United Trading Company in Winneba and he recruited members mainly from among his fellow-workers, most of whom were affiliated with the Methodist or A.M.E.Zion churches.

The doctrine espoused by Winneba members of the First Century Gospel is essentially the creation of the sect's founder, Pastor Clark, and is expressed in various pamphlets, tracts, and circulars which are sent periodically to local assemblies. Often these documents contain replies to questions raised by sect members in Ghana, most of the questions relating to everyday problems. The key to spiritual perfection in First Century Gospel lies in thinking and acting "scripturally" in all things. This involves fairly regular pronouncements by Clark on the minutae of members' daily lives and no matter is beyond the scope of the "Full Truth," as the doctrine is usually referred to. More than any other Christian body in Winneba this sect seeks to emphasize its separateness from the world, prohibiting marriage of its members with non-members, as well as a wide range of activities which includes serving in the army or the police force, teaching in "worldly schools" and contributing to "unscriptural projects" such as hospitals and maternity homes.

As mission-controlled bodies, the two Adventist groups (Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists) in Winneba ensure that the doctrines and teachings espoused by local assemblies conform to those authorized by their respective headquarters. These sects share a common concern with the Second Coming of Christ, but differ in their understanding of the precise manner in which this is to take place, as well as on certain other doctrinal points.

In general, the pattern and style of worship in all three American-based sects seem even more remote from traditional local experience than that of the mainstream denominations. Great emphasis is placed upon the written word and much time is spent in reading and discussing the scriptures and various lessons and tracts sent from headquarters. The prevailing mood is one of earnest dedication in an attempt to comprehend the word of God and the teachings of sect authorities. There is no drumming, dancing, hand-clapping, or shouting, and the hymns are generally sung solemnly in a slow tempo. Sermons, lessons, and talks are listened to attentively and without interruption and children who disturb the proceedings by crying or moving around are immediately taken outside by their parents until they have quietened down.

c) *Pentecostal Sects* (Apostolic Church, Christ Apostolic Church, Church of Pentecost, Christ Revival Church): Winneba was one of the earliest centers of Apostolic missionary activity in the country, an assembly of the British Apostolic church being formed in the town in 1938. In that year Pastor

S. A. Mensah, a native of Winneba who had been working for a time as Apostolic missionary in Nigeria, had a "revelation" that he should establish a branch in his home town. This became the Ghanaian headquarters of the Apostolic mission later in the year when Pastor James McKeown, the British resident missionary, left his former station at Asamankese following a dispute with Peter Anim, who was unofficial leader of the Asamankese converts.

In 1939 Anim seceded from the British mission to form his own Christ Apostolic Church and while a small branch of this church (led by Pastor Mensah) was established in Winneba, most members of the local Apostolic assembly remained loyal to McKeown. A further secession in 1953 led to the formation of a Church of Pentecost assembly (originally known as the Gold Coast Apostolic Church) when Pastor McKeown parted company with the British mission following a dispute with his superiors in England. The fourth Pentecostal group to make its appearance in Winneba was the Christ Revival Church, formed as a result of a purely local secession from the Apostolic assembly. This was preceded by a struggle between the National Council of the Apostolic Church and the Winneba assembly over the proposed transfer of its popular Effutu pastor to another branch. The dispute culminated in the dismissal of the pastor by the National Council and the former, supported by some two-thirds of the assembly in Winneba, proceeded to establish his own church.

These sects share a common body of doctrine and teachings, with the Christ Apostolic Church standing to one side only in its rejection of all forms of medical treatment. Here it has held fast to the old Faith Tabernacle view (the mission from which Christ Apostolic emerged in 1939). All four Pentecostal sects in Winneba stand in the western Pentecostalist tradition; all emphasize, in their published statements, the importance of such things as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost "with signs following," visions, prophecy, speaking-with-tongues, and faith healing. In practice, however, the more dramatic forms of Pentecostalism appear only rarely in sect gatherings. While each of these bodies conducts regular monthly faith healing sessions, these do not assume the importance of healing activities in the Spiritist churches. Unlike their Spiritist counterparts, the national leaders and local pastors of the Pentecostal sects are not renowned for their healing and prophetic gifts, but are admired for the unbounded zeal with which they preach and spread the gospel.

Pentecostal services in Winneba are conducted almost entirely in Fanti or Twi and are extremely lively affairs, with much time given over to singing popular revivalist hymns, most of which have a rousing chorus and are sung at a fast tempo. There are no choirs, although some sects have a Singing Band which takes the lead in initiating many of the hymns. During services the entire assembly, together with the leaders on the platform, sing with great gusto, often being exhorted to sing louder, faster, or with more feeling by the pastor or someone stationed in front of his table. Musical accompaniment is

invariably provided by a band of young girls who beat tambourines and there is always a man in the corner of the church building playing an improvised bass guitar, known as a "*bindo*" or "*bando*."

Members of the assembly are often out of their seats during the singing, as they sway and dance in the aisles or in the open area between the platform and the first row of pews. It is in this area that the offering bowl is placed during services, the members of the assembly dancing out toward it in single file, exclaiming joyously as they place their offerings in the bowl. Sermons and bible readings are frequently interrupted with cries of "Praise the Lord!" "Praise Him!" or "Halleluja!" from those in attendance. Sometimes the interruption takes the form of a song or hymn initiated by the Singing Band, or by an individual, and the pastor may have to ring a small hand bell to bring the singing to an end before resuming his sermon.

The Proliferation of Spiritist Churches in Winneba

In May of 1968 there were some fifteen Spiritist churches functioning in Winneba, ten of which were organized on a national or regional basis, their assemblies in town being local branches of wider organizations. The remainder were highly localized churches which had not yet developed a following outside the town. For purposes of identification we shall refer to the former as "Major Spiritist" churches and the latter as "Minor Spiritist" churches.

Chart A. Origins of Spiritist Assemblies Operating in Winneba in May, 1968

	Church	*Date of Introduction*		*Introducing Agents in Winneba*	*Comments*
		Ghana	*Winneba*		
1.	M.D.C.C.	1922	1930	Kweku Gyansa, an Effutu carpenter, after his son was healed by M.D.C.C. leader.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
2.	St. Anthony Healing Power	1916	1932	Ekua Bondziwah, an Effutu fishmonger, after her brother was healed by the church founder.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became Christ Healing Power Church in 1974.
3.	Twelve Apostles	1914	i) 1932	Kofi Sasa, a Fanti farmer.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
			ii) 1937	Ama Dadoobi, an Effutu petty trader and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.

	Church	Date of Introduction Ghana	Winneba	Introducing Agents in Winneba	Comments
			iii)1957	Ekua Attah, an Effutu petty trader and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
			iv) 1962	Beatrice Annobil, an Effutu fishmonger and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
4.	Church of the Lord	1953	1954	Apostle Adejobi, through Scoon Davies and Victoria Prempeh.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became Church of the Lord Ghana in 1962 following national secession.
5.	Cherubim and Seraphim	1931	1958	Prophet Atansuye, Nigerian leader of the church.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
6.	The Lord is There Temple	1954	1958	Pastor Frimpong, an Akwapim pastor of the church.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became Divine Healer's Church in 1966.
7.	African Faith Tabernacle	1927	1959	K. Otsiwa, an Effutu member of First Century Gospel.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans, but with some former members of First Century Gospel.
8.	Life and Salvation	1958	1961	A. K. Eshun, an Effutu clerk and ex-Methodist.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
9.	Christ Divine Healing Church	1963	1963	T. K. Oben, a Gomoa resident of Winneba and former Methodist catechist.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans and some ex-Methodists.
10.	Dugan's Church	1965	1965	Kojo Dugan, an Effutu blacksmith and former assistant pastor in M.D.C.C.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became Salvation Church in 1969.
11.	Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple	1965	1965	Jonathan Mensah, an Effutu and former pastor in Divine Healer's Church.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became defunct in 1968.
12.	Divine Healing Church	1955	1966	Pastor J. Oben, an Ahanta minister of the church.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became Saviour Church in 1971.
13.	Waternakaba	1966	1966	Alice Quansah, an Effutu petty trader.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.

	Church	Date of Introduction Ghana	Winneba	Introducing Agents in Winneba	Comments
14.	Christian Church	1959	1966	A. K. Hagan, a Fanti pastor and nephew of the church head.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans. Became Christian Divine Church in 1968.
15.	Redeemer Church of God	1967	1967	Hannah Botsie, an Effutu prophetess in Cherubim and Seraphim.	Local secession from Cherubim and Seraphim.

a) *Major Spiritist Churches*: We have already observed that the M.D.C.C. was the first of the Spiritist churches to take root in Winneba in 1930 and for many years the members met in Kweku Gyansa's home in Old Market Street, moving later to a rented building in the Dwoma district of the town. It was in 1962 that a church building was completed, the work being done wholly by members of the Winneba branch. Initially the activities of the branch were directed by Apostle Aikins from headquarters at Mozano, but after a few years the branch had its own resident pastor. Like most Spiritist churches in Ghana, the M.D.C.C. has not been involved in conflicts with secular authorities, but an incident occurred in 1932 which did cause the church considerable trouble and embarrasment. In November of that year members of the Goliath Mission, a militant sect from nearby Bensu, marched on Winneba to release prisoners in the town's jail. The marchers were intercepted by police at Gomoa Swedru and a violent clash ensued, in the course of which a police superintendent and two marchers were killed, while six constables and two marchers were seriously injured.[2] Since the Goliath Mission leader was named Appiah, the Winneba members of M.D.C.C. (whose leader was Prophet Jehu-Appiah) were mistakenly thought to be among his followers and several were arrested. After the misunderstanding had been officially recognized, M.D.C.C. members in the Swedru and Winneba districts were still viewed with suspicion by the local population and it took several years for memories of the incident to fade. Today the story of this episode is well known to most local members, who take great pride in their church's survival despite this early trial.

Two years after the introduction of M.D.C.C. to Winneba, a branch of St. Anthony Healing Power Church (known locally as "Power") was established in the town. In 1932 an Effutu fishmonger named Ekua Bondziwah took her sick brother to Prophet Elijah Mannor, the head of the church, at Attuapokeh, near Axim. There her brother was healed and Ekua Bondziwah left the A.M.E.Zion church, to which she had belonged, and formed the Winneba branch of Prophet Mannor's Church. In this same year a branch of the Church of the Twelve Apostles was formed in the town by a Fanti farmer named Kofi Sasa. When he was a young man living in Cape

Coast, Kofi Sasa became sick and was taken to Bishop Hackman, then head of the church at Kadjibir, in the western region of the country. There he regained his health and entered the ministry of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually he was made a Prophet and sent to look after the affairs of the branch at Swedru, from which he opened up Winneba as an out-station. By 1968 three additional branches of the church had been formed in Winneba, each with its own pastor and operating independently of the other, while recognizing Prophet Sasa as the national head of the church.[3]

The Church of the Lord Aladura was introduced to the town in 1954, being one of the first branches to be opened in Ghana after Apostle Adejobi began his missionary campaign in the country.[4] From his Kumasi headquarters he sent Scoon Davies and Victoria Prempeh—the former a Creole and the latter the daughter of the former Ashanti paramount chief, Prempeh I—to open the Winneba branch. During the disputes which wracked the church in 1961 and 1962 the majority of the Winneba members supported a faction led by Bishop Yamoah, who was pressing for an independent Ghanaian Church of the Lord. By November of 1962 the Winneba branch had formally affiliated with Yamoah's new Church of the Lord Ghana and in 1968 it was still part of this body.

The local branch of Cherubim and Seraphim was formed in 1958 when Prophet Atansuye from Nigeria visited Ghana to try to unify the work of the church in the country. In this he was unsuccessful, but during his visit he opened the Winneba branch and appointed the Rev. J. K. Amankwah of Cape Coast as its resident pastor. In the same year a branch of The Lord is There Temple—later re-named Divine Healer's Church—was established in Winneba by an Akwapim pastor named Frimpong, who was sent from church headquarters at Korlegonno, near Accra.

The African Faith Tabernacle (known locally as "Nkansah," with reference to its founder, Prophet Nkansah) was introduced to Winneba in 1959. In that year a native of Winneba named Otsiwa, who was a member of First Century Gospel, went to be healed by Prophet Nkansah at the latter's headquarters in Anyinam, some fifty miles northeast of Winneba. When his visit proved successful he left First Century Gospel and proceeded to organize the Winneba branch of the African Faith Tabernacle, beginning with some eight persons, three of whom were also former members of First Century Gospel. Two years later a branch of Prophet Prah's Life and Salvation Church was established in Winneba by an Effutu clerk named Eshun, a former Methodist who is said to have suffered from periodic fits of madness. After treatment at the Prophet's Saltpond headquarters, Eshun underwent a short period of training and returned to set up a healing camp in his home town. This developed into the local branch of the church.

In 1966 the local branch of the Divine Healing Church was formed. This group has its headquarters in Takoradi, where it was founded in 1955 by a Fanti trader, a woman named Aba Essabah. Prophetess Essabah was

"directed by the Spirit" to open a branch in Winneba and sent pastor John Oben, an Ahanta from the village of Shama (near Takoradi), to perform this task. After one year in Winneba, Oben had made little progress and he returned to his home village to try to form a branch there instead. When this also met with little success, he returned to Winneba and attempted to recommence the work he had begun earlier. By 1968 the local branch was functioning very precariously with only twenty-five menbers. Also making its appearance at this time was the Christian Church, a branch of which was opened in the town by Pastor A. K. Hagan, a nephew of the church founder and head, Apostle John Taylor.

b) *Minor Spiritist Churches*: The first of these purely local churches was the Christ Divine Healing Church, founded in 1963 by T. K. Oben. A member of the Gomoa tribe, Oben was stricken with blindness when he was about thirty years of age. In 1953 he went to Cape Coast to attend a healing and revival rally organized by Latter Rain, an evangelical association from Portland, Oregon, hoping that he might be cured of his affliction. This hope was not realized but at the close of the rally he "received the Holy Ghost" while at prayer. A Methodist, he returned to his home in Winneba where he became a catechist and lay preacher in the local Methodist church, continuing in this work for some nine years. During this time he organized a healing and prayer group which met at his home, but after some time his activities began to attract the attention of church authorities. He was warned that the Methodist church could not condone his behavior and in 1963 he left the church and established his own group.

Another local group known simply as Dugan's Church was formed in 1964 by an Effutu blacksmith named Kojo Dugan. For a time Dugan worked in Koforidua in the Eastern Region of Ghana and it was in that town that he became a member of M.D.C.C., in which body he eventually became an assistant pastor. Dugan broke with the M.D.C.C. in 1962 after a bitter dispute with his pastor, whom Dugan openly accused of adultery. He remained at Koforidua for another year, during which time people began to visit him at his home for healing treatment. In 1963 he returned to Winneba and organized his church there, using his father's house initially, but later acquiring a small plot of land upon which he built a wooden enclosure for services and a hut for patients requiring prolonged treatment.

In 1965 Jonathan K. Mensah established his Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple in Winneba. Raised as a Moslem, Mensah joined the Methodist church after attending the Methodist Middle School, becoming a catechist in 1958. In 1959 he became ill and went to consult Brother Lawson, the founder of The Lord is There Temple, where he regained his health. Mensah then joined this church and became a pastor, serving in this capacity until 1965, the year of his "vision." In this vision Mensah was instructed to form his own church and to name it "Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple." He left Brother

Lawson and proceeded to establish his church in Accra, with small outstations in a number of places along the coast, including Winneba. This venture was not a success, however, and in 1967 he moved to Winneba, where he devoted his energies to developing what had been the local branch of his Accra-based church.

The group known as Waternakaba was established by an Effutu petty trader named Alice Quansah in 1966. Although baptized in the Anglican church in Accra at the age of six, she did not maintain a regular connection with this or any other church. Her marriage ended after five years when her husband left her in 1965 and in the following year she had a "vision." In this vision "the spirit of an angel" appeared and told her that she should form her own church and name it "Waternakaba," which is said to mean "water calabashes." Because she was illiterate and unable to read from the Fanti Bible, she enlisted the support of an assistant named Samuel Ghunney, a native of Winneba and a member of the local Anglican church. With very few members, the future of this group appeared very uncertain in 1968.

The Redeemer Church of God was founded in 1967 by Hannah Botsie, a former member of the local branch of Cherubim and Seraphim. In 1961 she married Bishop Arthur, the local leader of this church, but the marriage ended after four years. She continued to be active in the church, however, and became a Prophetess in 1966. Soon after the marriage had ended, Bishop Arthur had to find employment in Cape Coast because the church could not afford to pay him a regular stipend. This meant that he could visit Winneba only on weekends. During his absences he left Hannah Botsie in charge, but trouble arose when he sent a young man named Captain Impraim to assist her. A struggle for control of the local assembly developed between the Prophetess and the Captain, and the membership split into two opposing factions. In September of 1967 Hannah Botsie finally left with some thirty supporters to found her own Redeemer Church of God.

An Overview

Spiritist churches first appeared in Winneba in the 1930's as branches of bodies which had been formed in other parts of Ghana. Their introduction in the town was mainly the work of persons who were affiliated with orthodox denominations, but who had come to find in Spiritism a convincing demonstration of victory over sickness; most of the charter members of these local assemblies, however, were former pagans who appear to have lost confidence in traditional healing methods. Despite some improvement in modern medical health facilities, this concern with spiritual healing seems to be just as evident in the circumstances surrounding the introduction of the later assemblies as it was in the pioneering days of Kweku Gyansa and Ekua Bondziwah.

At first the growth of Spiritism in Winneba was slow,[5] but from 1957 to 1967 we witness the remarkable growth in the number of Spiritist assemblies, as well as a dramatic (437%) increase in their membership. While the various non-Spiritist bodies also enjoyed an increase in membership between 1957 and 1967, their rate of growth fell far behind that of the Spiritists. In 1957 Spiritists accounted for only 9.5% of all communicant Christians in Winneba, but ten years later this had increased to 31.7%; during this period the denominations' share of Christian communicants decreased from 66.1% to 50.5%.

By 1968, some one hundred and thirty years after the first mission (Methodist) was established in Winneba, there had developed in the town a Christian community which, as an alternative to traditional religion, was markedly lacking in cohesion and unity. Inter-church cooperation was extremely limited in scope: the Ghana Christian Council brought together the Protestant denominations, who combined their efforts during the annual Christian Home Week, Good Friday processions and Harvest Festivals; similar forms of cooperation existed between the Apostolic Church, the Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of the Pentecost, all of which were members of the Ghana Evangelical Fellowship. The traditional isolation of the Roman Catholics and Adventist groups persisted, however, and the Spiritist churches were commonly regarded as being beyond the pale by most other churches. Only on important national occasions, such as memorial services for the leader of the 1966 military coup, did churches of all types (except Jehovah's Witnesses and First Century Gospel) join together in public. And on a smaller scale, memorial services for individual church members might be attended by contingents of relatives and friends from other churches.

Although there was little open denigration of rival churches by local leaders, suspicion and mistrust abounded in private. Many local church leaders betrayed an astonishing ingnorance of the doctrines of churches other than their own. The local Seventh-Day Adventist leader was violently and consistently anti-Roman Catholic, while his counterpart in First Century Gospel was unwilling to regard any church but his own as being truly Christian. The Spiritists, having enjoyed a considerable measure of success and having proven themselves attractive to some members of other churches, received criticism from all sides. They were commonly referred to as *nyamanyama* churches (*nyamanyama* means "worthless," literally "things things"), while some Pentecostal ministers described them privately as "fornication societies" or "ju-ju societies." The term "spiritual" (which is generally used by leaders and members of the Spiritist churches to describe their groups) was held up for ridicule by many other Christians in town, who were fond of saying, "If they are 'Spiritual' churches, then we must be 'Physical' churches; what nonsense!"

Much of this resentment and hostility toward the Spiritist churches stemmed from a fear, especially on the part of church leaders, that some members of their congregations might be secretly consulting Spiritist healers in times of illness or personal difficulty. In the A.M.E.Zion church the pastor, with the approval of his Bishop, tried to meet this problem by permitting a prayer and healing group to exist *within* the church. In 1968 this group was led by the pastor's wife and while it no doubt kept some members happy, it was also proving to be a source of embarrassment for some of the more orthodox and conservative members of the congregation. The A.M.E.Zion response to Spiritism was exceptional, however, and in subsequent chapters we shall try to understand the nature of Spiritism's appeal and why it should be seen as a threat by the majority of other churches in Winneba.

Notes for Chapter Two

[1]Since the end of the second World War the two bodies have run united schools in some parts of the country (although not in Winneba) as well as a joint theological college in Kumasi.

[2]*Case No. C.P. 1090/1933 Riots–Winneba District*, Public Archives, Cape Coast.

[3]This church has no unified national organization. Apart from the body headed by Prophet Sasa at Swedru, there are at least two other bodies in the country with the name "Cherubim and Seraphim."

[4]For a comprehensive historical and theological analysis of the Church of the Lord see Turner's *African Independent Church*.

[5]Since no records are kept of Spiritist groups which might have been formed and subsequently disappeared during this period, we have had to rely upon the recollections of older members of existing Spiritist assemblies.

III

FAITH IN ACTION: 1967–68

Spiritist Faith

The hopes and aspirations of Spiritists find their clearest expression in collective actions, rather than in formal doctrines and teachings. With two notable exceptions (Church of the Lord and Cherubim and Seraphim) the groups represented in Winneba in 1967–68 showed little interest in producing doctrinal expositions and commentaries, and even in these two exceptional cases the published statements, produced mainly by Nigerian leaders, were largely unknown to local members and leaders.[1] Most of the churches in town operated without reference to such material, although some made available short summary statements of the "What We Believe" variety. Sometimes the principal articles of faith were included in the church's annual calendar or almanac, which usually took the form of a wall poster showing a picture of the church founder or current head. The Minor Spiritist churches managed to get by even without such rudimentary doctrinal statements.

Apart from the emphasis placed upon "spiritual healing" these summaries of Spiritist beliefs are unremarkable, except perhaps in their orthodoxy. This impression is borne out in discussions with local leaders, who often expressed the view that the major differences between their groups and the orthodox denominations were to be found at the level of *practice* rather than beliefs; and when asked to indicate what the major beliefs of their churches were, they almost invariably cited a number of practices which were then contrasted with those of other groups:

> We preach the same things as they (the Methodists) do. But we practice what we preach and they don't. We are concerned with spiritual things more than they are. They talk a great deal, but we talk and do. (Pastor, *Life and Salvation Church*)

> We believe in spiritual healing and we speak against smoking, drinking, and gambling. We don't charge for healing like some other Spiritist churches. And we don't use candles or holy water as some others do. (Pastor, *Divine Healer's Church*)

> We teach faith in God and our services are conducted in Fanti, but sometimes people speak in different tongues when the Spirit is upon them. We use the Bible, the bell, candles, holy water, cymbals, and drums. We get along well with people in the Church of the Lord and Power Church. They do almost the same things as we do in our services. But we don't have much contact with Taylor's Church (Christian Church), Christ Revival, or the Church of Pentecost, for their beliefs and ways of doing things are very different. (Bishop, *Cherubim and Seraphim*)

When we observe the Spiritist churches in action and talk with their leaders and members, it becomes clear that their central concern is the quest of the Holy Spirit, characterized by attempts to promote situations favorable for its descent among believers and to harness its gifts in the amelioration of members' pressing problems. In this quest a utilitarian, this-worldly emphasis is paramount and relatively little attention is paid to eschatological matters. While all these churches recognize both Old and New Testaments as being "equal in authority," it is the New Testament which is cited most frequently in support of official doctrinal statements, a discrepancy which is explained by local leaders in terms of the greater practical relevance of the New Testament for bodies whose prime concern is with healing the sick and helping the suffering. And while all subscribe to the trinitarian conception of the Godhead, in practice it is the Holy Spirit which commands their most earnest attention.

Some churches (M.D.C.C., Cherubim and Seraphim, Church of the Lord, and Christian Church) offer new members a basic instruction in scriptural knowledge, but a literal understanding of the Bible is not considered to be a prerequisite for reaping the benefits of Spiritism. These come only to those who have faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, a faith which can "work wonders." This faith must be cultivated so that the Holy Spirit may descend upon the believers and perform its miraculous healing works and offer revelation and protection for the troubled. And while it is acknowledged that the Spirit may make its presence felt swiftly and unexpectedly, individuals and assemblies seek to promote manifestations of the Spirit through vigils, fasts, prayers, singing, drumming, and dancing.

The Spirit may descend upon a person when he is alone, but we find that it is during the group activities of the church, especially the healing session or the service, that expectations are highest. The inspired sermon or exhortation, or the rhythmic drumming, dancing, and singing appear to be particularly conducive to the production of behavior believers associate with the presence of the Holy Spirit. People may then begin to cry out in joy that the Spirit has entered them or that Jesus is in their midst, while others proceed to roll or struggle on the floor of the church. Among the various gifts of the Spirit, those of healing and prophecy receive the greatest emphasis: and while it is believed that these may be bestowed upon any person strong in faith, they are typically claimed only by the pastors, the local prophets, and a few of the more "gifted" members. Other gifts, such as speaking-with-tongues or interpreting tongues, are also felt to be manifested on occasion, but arouse comparatively little interest.

Patterns of Worship

In the degree of enthusiasm and member-participation displayed, the Spiritist church services surpass even those of the Pentecostalists. For the

most part the patterns and styles of worship reflect the particular religious backgrounds of the church founders. Some (Church of the Lord, Cherubim and Seraphim) reveal an Anglo-Catholic influence in their attention to the sacraments and also in their use of such things as altars, candles, and incense. Others (Divine Healer's Church, Christian Church) bear the imprint of nonconformist Protestantism, especially in its Methodist form, with a much greater emphasis upon preaching and exhortation. This does not mean, however, that all churches can be fitted neatly into one or the other of these two categories; in the M.D.C.C., for example, the service displays features which are derived from both the Anglo-Catholic and nonconformist Protestant traditions in almost equal measure; and in the Christ Divine Healing Church the founder, a former Methodist, has introduced a personal glossolalia (which he believes to be Hebrew) into a pattern of worship which includes both Roman Catholic and Protestant elements. Where the founders of Minor Spiritist churches have previously belonged to Major Spiritist churches, they generally carry over into their new groups the forms of worship with which they have become familiar.

In the seating arrangements at services members are segregated according to sex and authority and in some cases the members wear special and distinctive uniforms. Both male and female members of the Church of the Lord, for example, wear white gowns, while office-holders wear, in addition, sashes of different colors, each color denoting a particular rank or office within the local assembly. In most churches, however, African dress is the norm and European style clothing is seldom encountered among those attending services. Other requirements, such as the removal of footwear prior to entering the place of worship, are quite common and this practice is defended with reference to such scriptural passages as Exodus 3:5 and Joshua 5:15.

Among the pastors and local prophets the long white cassock, or white shirt and slacks, is the most common form of dress. Where there are junior or assistant pastors, these normally wear the same garb as the pastor, whose superior status may be shown by his wearing a cassock of a different color (Cherubim and Seraphim), or a special hat (M.D.C.C.). Only in Life and Salvation Church does the pastor wear the western lounge suit and clerical collar, while the woman pastor of the Divine Healer's Church wears African dress without special accoutrements.

Features of Spiritist Services

a) *Sermons and Bible Readings*: One of the first things to impress the visitor to a service is the almost complete absence of bibles, the few which are to be seen usually being found upon the tables of the leader or elders. It would be quite wrong to conclude from this that the Bible has little place in Spiritist worship, for these churches do make frequent reference to the scriptures,

which are used as a basis for sermons, shorter "lessons," or are simply read to the assembly at various times during the service. Indeed, the Spiritist assemblies generally quote the scriptures more frequently than do the other Christian bodies in the town and read (or, more accurately, hear) a larger number of scriptural verses during the course of their services.

Despite the Spiritists' recognition of "equal authority" for both Old and New Testaments, some forty-three (78.1%) of the fifty-five readings we recorded in services were drawn from the New Testament. In ten of the services attended, a single reading formed the basis of the sermon, which occupied a distinct place in the order of worship: in the remaining five services scriptural passages were read at various times during the proceedings, sometimes with elaborative comment following. In most cases the themes of sermons and lessons were readily identifiable, but in others, especially where a number of apparently discrete passages were read without further comment, it was sometimes difficult to ascertain the message intended by the reader in question.

As we noted earlier, the churches differ quite widely in the emphasis placed on preaching. In the Church of the Lord and Cherubim and Seraphim, the pastors spent only about ten minutes on this part of the service, while in the M.D.C.C. the pastor preached a sermon which lasted well over an hour. Most preaching was conducted in an animated and aggressive style, the pastor or local prophet using techniques familiar in traditional oratory, interrupting his sermon quite often to ask his listeners, "Do you hear?" or "Is it not so?" A great wealth of illustrative material is used by most preachers, so much indeed that the basic theme often appears to be swamped or obscured by it. On the whole, preaching is well received and the length of the sermon is no guide in this respect: the M.D.C.C. assembly listened attentively and responded appreciatively to a very lengthy sermon, while the pastor of Cherubim and Seraphim experienced the greatest difficulty in holding the assembly's attention for a mere ten minutes or so.

b) *Prayers*: In Nigeria the independent prophet-healing churches are normally known as *Aladura*, or "praying churches," because of their emphasis upon this particular practice, which is said to be in accord with the extensive use of prayer in traditional Yoruba religion.[2] While a good deal of time is given over to prayer in Winneba's Spiritist churches, this is by no means so pronounced a feature of their services as it appears to be among the Nigerian churches. Nor does the practice of praying stand out as a distinctive feature of Spiritist worship in comparison with that of the other local churches. Praying is engaged in more frequently in the services of both orthodox denominations and Pentecostal sects than in those of the Spiritists.

If the Spiritist churches in general cannot be said to devote more attention to prayer in services than do the orthodox denominations, they do differ from the latter bodies in terms of the extent to which prayer is

recognized as an act of worship performed by the pastor on behalf of the congregation or assembly. Only in the services of the Pentecostal sects do we find more prayers being said by assembly members than by pastors, but the Spiritist churches are not far behind in this respect. In most Spiritist services the praying practice is shared almost equally between the leader and the assembly, although the Christian Church and Christ Divine Healing Church are exceptions in this respect, with most of the prayers being said by the assembly leader. In those churches where the Anglo-Catholic influence is most evident, the pastor prays, or initiates prayers, from a special place in the church, known as the "Sanctuary" (Cherubim and Seraphim, Redeemer Church of God, and St. Anthony Healing Power Church) or the "Holy of Holies" (Church of the Lord). In the other churches the pastor prays from his table, except when his prayers are connected with a healing session, when he stands among the patients.

On only two occasions did we observe the use of prayer books and in both cases (Cherubim and Seraphim and Church of the Lord) these were in the hands of pastors, who used them sparingly. With the exception of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, which were said in nearly all of the services we attended, the members' prayers were not formally recited, but freely uttered. This does not mean that the prayers lacked structure, for pastors often asked their assemblies to pray for a number of specified things:

> I call on all present to pray. Thank God for making it possible for us to meet here today. Ask him to forgive your sins and ask for his blessing.

Sometimes the members were asked to pray silently after being given such instructions, but the normal practice is for members to pray aloud, individually yet simultaneously. The result is a deafening cacophany of sound as each person strives, or so it would appear, to outdo the others in earnestness of appeal, rapidity of speech and loudness of voice. The contents of the prayers that we could hear clearly are hardly remarkable and cover a number of basic themes: forgiveness of sins, comfort in sickness, conversion of the pagans, guidance for the members, protection from evil, blessings for political leaders, blessings for the Spiritist churches, etc.

c) *Testimonies*: In nine of the fifteen churches (St. Anthony Healing Power Church, Dugan's Church, Redeemer Church of God, Cherubim and Seraphim, M.D.C.C., Life and Salvation Church, Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple, African Faith Tabernacle, and Divine Healer's Church) part of the service is given over to the hearing of testimonies (*Adasedzi*). The pastor or prophet asks persons to come forward and "witness to God's goodness" or "tell what the Lord has done for you." Normally there is no lack of response to this request and it appears to be a very popular and enjoyable part of the service.

The majority (50.4%) of the testimonies we recorded consisted of expressions of thanks for general and unspecified benefits:

> I wish to thank the Lord and to praise him for all that he has done for me. (Woman)
>
> I have to thank God for all that he has done for me. I will sing to glorify his name. (Woman)

The next largest category (27.6%) consisted of testimonies from those who had recently been healed, or whose relatives had been healed:

> I have had trouble with my eyes. I prayed to God and today they are better. I wish to sing to honor the Lord. (Woman)
>
> I have been suffering from chest pains for some time now. I visited the pastor two days ago and he prayed for me. Now the pains are gone. (Man)

Some 14.3% of the testimonies expressed thanks for God's protection, usually in connection with travelling:

> I wish to thank God for all the protection he has given me during my recent travels. (Woman)

Another woman expressed thanks for her son's narrow escape from death:

> It was God who rescued my son when he was caught in a passing stream after the heavy rains of yesterday. I want to thank him for what he has done.

Not all persons use the *Adasedzi* phase of the service to offer thanks for benefits received. Some testimonies (10.4%) took the form of petitions of various kinds:

> I want to ask God to give me a divine cure for my leg. (Elderly man with swollen leg)
>
> Before I go to visit my sister in Accra, I want to ask God for spiritual protection on my journey. (Woman)

The remaining testimonies covered a wide range of troubles and difficulties which people felt had been resolved as a result of divine intervention:

> I have three children and they all took to drinking. This worried me so much that I decided to petition before God. I am happy to say that none of them continues to be a drunkard. (Woman)
>
> I was once an *Osofo*, but later in life I became a member of A.M.E.Zion. When I developed a cough and suffered from spells of vomiting, the church could do nothing to help me. But since I have been a member of Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple I have never felt better. I ask all present to join me in giving praise to the Lord. (Woman)

An elderly man in the Life and Salvation Church held the members' rapt attention as he told how he had discovered that his young wife was a witch and how he had been saved from a disastrous marriage:

> I want to tell you that every one of you should have a copy of the church's calendar. I had mine specially blessed by Prophet Prah, so much so that it could drive away evil spirits. I put my copy on the wall of my bedroom. When my new wife came to live with me she felt uncomfortable in the presence of the calendar. I then came to realize that she was a witch, for she showed signs of uneasiness each time she came into the room. So I put the calendar on the wall above my bed. My wife could not share the bed with me after that. She screamed all night. This continued for some time and she finally stopped coming to my house in the evening. I reported the case to her family and the necessary steps were taken for a divorce.

In his classic *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, Sundkler makes two interesting observations on the nature of testimonies in the "Zionist" churches, the type which most closely resembles those we describe here. Remarking upon the tendency of the testimonies to become routinized, liturgical expressions whose form has to be followed by all the members, he writes:

> In the name of the freedom of the Spirit, the serfdom of the formula is being definitely established[3]

We could find little evidence of a similar development in the Spiritist churches of Winneba. One certainly gets the impression that many members, especially those who offer thanks for general and unspecified blessings, do so out of a sense of duty or appropriateness; and there is usually an expectation that each testimony will end with a personal cash offering and short song of praise. But there is little evidence of standardized recitation in the testimonies we recorded in Spiritist services. Sundkler also points to the supercession of the sermon by testimonies in South African Zionist churches, but here again it is difficult to detect a similar process at work among the Spiritists.[4] Of the five churches which had no sermon as a distinctive part of their service, two (Christ Divine Healing Church and Twelve Apostles) also did not hear testimonies. In the remaining three churches (Divine Healer's Church, Life and Salvation Church, and African Faith Tabernacle) testimonies were heard, but with a frequency only slightly higher than the average for all churches which engage in this practice.

Before leaving the subject of testimonies, it may be noted that these often indicate the importance of prayer in ways which are not always apparent when we consider only the frequency and contents of prayer uttered in Spiritist services. For many of the testimonies clearly attest to a strong belief in the efficacy of prayer, whether said by a pastor, prophet or individual member, in relieving the sufferer from a wide variety of afflictions and hardships.

d) *Music and Song*: Singing takes up a considerable portion of the time spent in Spiritist services. There are no church choirs of the kind found in the orthodox denominations, although some churches (M.D.C.C., Life and Salvation Church, Church of the Lord, St. Anthony Healing Power Church) have Singing Bands whose members meet once or twice a week for practice.

Hymnals, like bibles, are encountered infrequently during visits to services. The Church of the Lord has its own official hymnal, while others make use of the Methodist Fanti Hymnal, together with hand-written copies of hymn collections culled from a variety of sources. Apart from these African versions of hymns which were largely introduced by the missions and their orthodox successors, new hymns appear to be fairly regularly introduced by composers within some of the churches. The blind leader of Christ Divine Healing Church, for example, claims that the words of most hymns sung in his church have been communicated to him in dreams and visions and are then set to music by one of his assistants, who is a schoolteacher. Although each church has a small core of hymns which are peculiar to itself, there is a great deal of overlapping in this area.

The hymns themselves fall into certain well-defined categories, the largest of which consists of straightforward hymns of praise:

He is the one who saved me, O Jesus!

or:

We thank you, we praise you, O heavenly King. His name shall be called Wonderful!

Others express a firm commitment to the Christian way of life:

Living, I live for God.
Dying, I die for the Lord.
God the Father is my Savior.
Living, I live for Him!

Certain hymns testify to the gifts which are bestowed upon the faithful:

He is walking with us.
Satan cannot harm us!

or:

Gifts of grace have been distributed among us.
Everyone has his own.

Many convey urgent appeals to turn to Jesus, the most popular of this type being:

Why do you delay?
Come and join the Lord!
Why do you delay?
Come and join the Lord!
For there is danger while you delay!

The hymns are generally sung in Fanti and occasionally in English and Guan, although in Twelve Apostles a few are sung in a language said by the local leader to be Kru and to have been inspired by the Liberian prophet, William Wade Harris.[5] In all the churches singing is accompanied by hand-

clapping, drumming, and, in most cases, the use of *akasaa* and *nfatsewa*. In some services rhythmic accompaniment is provided by the *bindo* guitar. Occasionally the pastor contributes by playing an instrument—usually the drum—but this is normally left to especially skilled performers among the members. Except in the case of slow and solemn hymns, which are extremely rare in Spiritist services, the singing is also accompanied by dancing on the part of leaders and members. Solo performances occur very infrequently, although a person may occupy a position of prominence during a particular dance. Dancing is regarded as an essential means of expressing joy in Christ and the dancers may shout the Lord's praises, wave handkerchiefs, or raise their arms heavenward while the dance is under way. As in the Pentecostal sects, dancing also takes place during the offering, when members leave their places to come to the offering bowl in front of the sanctuary or the pastor's table.

e) *Messages and Visions*: In four churches (Cherubim and Seraphim, Church of the Lord, Redeemer Church of God, and Dugan's Church) the services include a period devoted to the reporting of "messages" by leaders or members. This appears to be a relatively minor phase of the service for all but the Church of the Lord, where it emerges quite clearly as the high point of this group's Sunday service. During the service we attended in this church some fifteen persons responded to the pastor's invitation to "reveal any messages" they had received and the following are fairly typical of the reports given:

> During the service I saw a long line of flowers stretching from the church entrance to the "Mercy Ground" (a place in the church courtyard used mainly for healing ceremonies) outside. (Woman)
>
> During the adoration I saw many lighted candles on the altar. (Man)
>
> I saw something adorned with many different flowers and also a woman in a white gown holding a palm branch. (Woman)
>
> I saw a light much brighter than the sun and four young men coming into the church to distribute gifts. (Woman)

After the members had reported their messages it was the turn of the pastor:

> I saw many people running from the beach to the church. They carried handkerchiefs with the word "Victory" printed upon them. I saw Jesus pointing at us. He poured olive oil upon us and blessed us. He said that the white man's coming (referring to my presence in the church) is a blessing from Almighty God. He said that from now until the end of the week we should come daily to the church to give thanks. I also saw some people coming from a stall to give eggs to the children. Three people must sleep in the church tonight. Remember the children. Give them Holy Water so that they will avoid illness.

These messages were similar in content to those given in the Redeemer Church of God. Here, as in the Church of the Lord, the members' messages

were somewhat vague, while those of the pastor were more sharply defined in terms of specific directions or remedies they offered. In Dugan's Church the messages were given by the prophet alone and these appear to be a personal modification of the M.D.C.C. practice, known as "casting lots."[6]

f) *Speaking-with-Tongues*: In none of the churches did revelation proceed through glossolalia and its interpretation. Occasionally, at the height of the singing and dancing, a person might cry out in a language we could not comprehend and which the pastor, replying to our questions at the close of the service, regarded as speaking-with-tongues. These utterances, however, were not interpreted and were largely ignored by other members, being regarded in much the same way as the more common exclamations such as "Praise the Lord!" "Halleluja!" and "Jesus!"

Of a different order from these calls and shouts is the language used by the leader of the Christ Divine Healing Church. This language, which the blind prophet believes to be Hebrew, is not understood by any of his followers, although they recognize the word "Aravaria" as one demanding the response, "Amen!" The prophet prayed in his special language during the service we attended at his home, one variant of his Hebrew sounding very much like simulated Latin:

> O lavine heriuns! Sru mazi we bikiria romoria in tiberia. Wo le mensai we ber ahiri, Aravaria! Rori ahin teri an kari an kabri. We aherians gru ma superia. . . . Heriuns su ambed per as ad, in du id tahiri. Wo aherin sisteria, Aravaria!

The second variant resembled more closely a simulated Arabic and was used by the prophet to deliver a prayer in the undulating singing style of a mallam:

> Wen dani mehuria meduria lama bo. Bikinda leberia ha l'ila. We hammeduri visa. We an dora se etse rila. . . . Hammeduria maduria tena kwiarawa.

The prophet himself claims that the ability to speak this "divine language" was given to him in 1953, when he experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost while attending the Latter Rain rally in Cape Coast. He has not sought to teach his followers this language and members of his church, unlike those of the M.D.C.C., do not employ parts of the "divine language" when exchanging greetings, etc.[7]

g) *Healing*: Healing is the principal activity of the Spiritist churches and the major attraction for those who join them. As such, it is discussed separately in the next section. Meanwhile, we may simply note that the healing session is an integral part of the major weekly service in six of these churches (Christian Church, Cherubim and Seraphim, St. Anthony Healing Power Church, Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple, Dugan's Church, and Redeemer Church of God).

Healing and Miracles

Apart from the healing which is undertaken as a regular part of the main weekly service in some churches, this work is also done in special sessions known as "the healing clinic," "the healing service," or "the healing session." Such healing sessions may occur only once weekly, as in St. Anthony Healing Power Church, or as many as six times a week, as is the practice of M.D.C.C. The vast majority of those who are treated in services or in these special healing sessions are "out-patients," although six of the churches (Cherubim and Seraphim, M.D.C.C., Church of the Lord, Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple, Dugan's Church, and Redeemer Church of God) have rooms in or near their places of worship where the more seriously ill patients may stay for the duration of their treatment.

It is extremely difficult to obtain accurate and reliable information on the numbers of persons who consult Spiritist healers, or on the precise nature of their ailments. With the exception of M.D.C.C. and Life and Salvation Church, the Spiritist churches in Winneba keep no records of their patients or their illnesses. Estimates offered by the healers themselves suggest that about two hundred and sixty "cases" are dealt with each week, but personal observations of healing sessions point to a somewhat lower figure, probably around one hundred and almost certainly not more than one hundred and fifty. Women and children account for about three-fourths of all patients.[8] Records kept by the local branch of the Life and Salvation Church do not indicate the nature of a patient's ailment, but simply state that a particular person came for "healing" or for "spiritual protection." Those kept by the M.D.C.C. are much more detailed and informative, following a regular format required by church headquarters at Mozano, although the records make no distinction between male and female patients. In the "Sick Returns" submitted by the Winneba branch of this church for 1967, "malaria and other fevers" comprised the largest category of ailment treated, followed by "constipation," "pregnancy," "worms," and "convulsions and fits."

Not all those who come to be healed are members of Spiritist churches. Healing sessions are open to all and are an important means of recruiting new members, although it would seem that most patients lose contact with the healers after treatment is completed. Contrary to popular belief among local non-Spiritists, there are no fixed charges for treatment, but patients are expected to pledge a gift, in cash or in kind, before treatment begins. Cases of failure to honor such pledges are extremely rare, although many persons repay their debts to Spiritist healers by giving a little each week during the *Adasedzi* phase of the church service.

The forms of treatment vary slightly from church to church, but tend to follow a common general pattern. The patient is anointed with olive oil, water, or a mixture of both.[9] These substances, before application, are prayed over and consecrated by the local healer, although sometimes the local

branches of Major Spiritist churches are supplied with oil or water which has been specially consecrated by the national head of the church. Before the anointing takes place prayers are said by the healer, for example:

> O Jesus, our Savior and Great Healer, we beseech you to come among us and relieve us of our troubles and ailments.

or:

> O Lord, we have come here today to humbly ask for your blessing. Do come down among your people and give them health. Banish the evil spirits which have been troubling them. Perform your miraculous healing works so that all might be well with them. O Jesus, take pity on these poor people here assembled. Come! Come! Come!

The patient then comes to stand or kneel before the healer and is anointed. In most churches this is done simply by making the sign of the cross upon the patient's forehead, while in others the afflicted part of the body is anointed. The healers themselves differ greatly in their demeanor and general behavior during the healing session. Sometimes the anointing is done in a tender and gentle fashion, while some healers grasp the patient firmly and push or slap the afflicted part of the body, loudly commanding the sickness to depart in the name of Jesus. At some sessions we find healers who conduct themselves in an apparently methodical, disinterested and routine manner, rather like a busy doctor dealing with a large number of out-patients, while at others we observe healers who appear highly agitated, gesticulating, and crying out as they attend to their patients.

Pre-healing confessions are not normally required of patients, but in the treatment of involuntary witchcraft the patient (the witch) cannot be dealt with until after a full confession of the witchcraft activities has been made. This will typically involve the patient in a series of public statements before those assembled for healing sessions, and a full confession may take days, or even weeks, to complete to the healer's satisfaction. A few of these self-accusing "witches," the vast majority of whom are women, make regular visits to Spiritist churches for confession and treatment, but most take up residence at the churches as in-patients for the duration of their treatment. After the confession has been made and preparatory treatment (including a diet of specially-prepared and consecrated food and drink, or a period of fasting) is concluded, the evil spirit is exorcised through anointment and the laying-on of hands, accompanied by fervent prayer and exhortation on the part of the healer. On such occasions the patients invariably display "possession behavior" as the Holy Spirit enters to struggle with and overpower the *Ogyapa*, or witch-spirit, within. While this spiritual battle is being waged, the patient rolls, writhing and kicking, about the floor, sometimes throwing herself against the walls of the church building, knocking over tables and chairs, until she finally comes to rest or is restrained by others.

In the treatment of all forms of sickness great importance is attached to the healing session, which affords direct and personal contact between the healer and the patient. But the healing power of the Holy Spirit is harnessed by patients in a variety of ways outside the context of the healing session, following the advice and instructions of the healer. Among the "spiritual exercises" prescribed for patients are fasting and various dietary restrictions, while prayer is regarded as being especially efficacious in all the local Spiritist churches. In the M.D.C.C. emphasis is placed on "system prayer," which requires the patient to repeat certain specified prayers several times daily at particular hours and places, usually employing the church's own fifteen-bead rosary, known as the *Inaabi*. In the Church of the Lord "set prayers" are also prescribed for the sick, a great many of these prayers being psalms, in whole or in part. The use of specially blessed candles and incense for healing is encouraged in this church, as it is in Cherubim and Seraphim, Twelve Apostles, Divine Healing Church, and the Redeemer Church of God, while in several churches patients may have their small bottles of tap water blessed by the healer for use at home.

The development of various "do-it-yourself" healing techniques appears to have proceeded farthest in the Life and Salvation Church where the founder, Prophet Prah, has produced a "Special Miracle Healing Card" which can be purchased at church headquarters and local branches for 10 pesewas (about 10 cents). The Prophet is said to have prayed over these cards for several months in order to endow them with "healing and miracle power from the Lord." The purchaser is instructed to apply the card to the afflicted part of the body and pray for five or ten minutes, saying "Heal me, O Lord." This church also sells special handkerchiefs (again prayed over and blessed by the Prophet) which are felt to contain miraculous healing properties.

Despite the central importance of healing in the life of the Spiritist churches, the healers themselves do not uniformly subscribe to any single theory of disease and its causes. There is, of course, a common and firmly held assumption that the curative power of the Holy Spirit, properly entreated and working primarily through the medium of the gifted healer, can alleviate all the sufferings of those who are strong in faith, no matter what the nature of these sufferings may be. But beyond this fundamental operating principle, the views of the healers can vary quite widely. Like Effutu traditional healers, they do not work with with a fixed system of disease classification: diseases may result from physical or "natural" causes (*Nkratodobi*) or from spiritual causes (*Sunsumtodobi*) and it is part of the healer's job to determine causation in each individual manifestation of the disease. In doing so, however, Spiritist healers are strongly predisposed to seek a spiritual source of patients' problems, since they are normally dealing with ailments which have not responded to the patients' own remedies and since they are also convinced that even the most overtly "physical" ailments (e.g., injuries sustained in a fall) are often due to spiritual forces.

The concept of *Sunsumtodobi* is a multi-faceted one which embraces a multiplicity of spiritual causes. Among its many applications, the following appear to be most important:

i) The notion that an ailment is the result of the intrusion of an evil spirit into the patient, where it proceeds to "take hold of" the patient's own spirit (*sunsum*) and works its will upon it. This notion lies at the heart of the Effutu theory of involuntary witchcraft and is also employed in the explanation of frightening or disturbing dreams.

ii) The notion that an ailment is the result of the intrusion of an evil spirit into the patient, where it proceeds to devour the soul (*kra*) of its victim. This idea figures prominently in the explanation of many ailments of a prolonged, "wasting-away" character and which are generally attributed to the machinations of malevolent witches.

iii) The notion that the ailment is the result of the intrusion of bad medicine (*edur*) into the patient, sometimes with results similar to those described in ii above, but more often associated with sudden, unexpected changes of fortune, or the deaths of apparently healthy persons.

iv) The notion that an ailment is the result of the activities of malign spirits which, without necessarily entering the body of the patient, inflict injuries upon him, or put obstacles and difficulties in his way. These spirits may be those of persons, living or dead, whom the patient has offended or injured at one time or another; or they may belong to that general class of capricious spirits (*Abonsam*) whose members strike with unpredictable malice and whose motives are most difficult for humans to discern. This fourth notion of *Sunsumtodobi* is frequently used to account for accidents, especially in cases where people suffer a series of minor misfortunes and setbacks.

v) The notion that an ailment is the result of a person's failure to keep his spiritual defenses in good order, normally manifested in the leading of an "impure" or "wordly" life, or loss of faith in the Holy Spirit, or back-sliding from membership in the church. This notion is almost always applied to errant, wavering, or renegade members' ailments and misfortunes, whether major or minor.

The various destructive spiritual forces are seen by Spiritist healers as operating under the aegis of Satan and are often described collectively as "Satan's Forces," or the "Army of the Devil." Indeed, when Spiritist leaders are asked what their main purpose is, the usual reply is "to heal people and wage a war against Satan's forces." While no one is absolutely safe from these harmful forces, it is believed that those who are spiritually weak are especially vulnerable to their ravages, while those who trust in God and the Holy Spirit enjoy a greater measure of security and protection. The concept of a punitive God who inflicts sickness and misfortune upon the sinful is almost completely absent from local Spiritist aetiology; only two healers cite the direct actions of God as a possible cause of some misfortune.[10] In the Spiritist scheme of things,

the wicked are much more likely to be left without God's protection than to be made the direct targets of divine wrath.

Local Spiritist leaders claim that they discourage members from consulting traditional healers, although we heard no sermon or bible lesson which could readily be construed as a critique of traditional healers or their methods. Occasionally, during a healing session, a Spiritist healer might make much of the condition of a patient who had previously undergone unsuccessful treatment at a traditional shrine, but these acts of discouragement appeared no more frequently than did instances in which the futile efforts of western doctors, or even of fellow-Spiritist healers, were held up for negative comment.

While Spiritist healers are quite ready, in private conversation, to condemn traditional medicine as "fetish," "ju-ju," or "pagan," they are generally much less emphatic in their condemnation of western medicine which, they suggest, can bring relief when the ailments do not have a "spiritual" source; indeed, most healers admit to having prescribed patent medicines (as well as herbs and other ingredients used in traditional medicine) "when directed by the Spirit to do so."[11]

In a general sense, all manifestations of the Holy Spirit, including spiritual healing, are regarded as "miraculous," but the term "miracle" is often used to describe specific, dramatic events which are usually witnessed by large numbers of people (typically including a number of "outsiders"). These miracles are almost always worked at church headquarters, or at some place other than the local branch, but news of them is spread quickly throughout the church. They seem most likely to occur during special regional or national gatherings of the church, when members from various branches have assembled together. In such cases they are invariably regarded as constituting significant landmarks in the history of the church and may themselves become the object of annual celebrations or commemorations. In the calendar of the Christian Church, for example, there is a section entitled "Important Events," in which Apostle Taylor describes the miracles which have been worked during the life of his church:

> 26th March, 1961—To round off the celebration of Palm Sunday, the whole church was jubilantly parading through the streets of Tarkwa when suddenly a lorry ran over four of the church members but, by a wonderful interposition of Providence, the four brethren, Sister Effua Atta, Ekua Gyatsiwa and son, Brother Adjei-Gya, were dragged from under the lorry absolutely safe and sound. It was an incredible scene indeed.
>
> 12th April, 1963—During an Easter Convention at Dominasi (near Mpohor) in the Takoradi District, a small child of about nine years got lost in the bush for six days and was recovered through prayers. The child narrated his story which was very wonderful indeed and which convinced all his listeners that his recovery was a miraculous work of God.
>
> 26th March, 1964—During an Easter Convention at Dunkwa (on Offin) one of the male members, Mr. Sagoe, aged about thirty-five years, was electrocuted and his

> breath was completely out of him. The deceased lay in the rain, whilst a police officer insistently gave orders for the body to be conveyed to the hospital for post-mortem examination. The Apostle did not give in, and after praying for well over forty-five minutes the deceased was brought back to life. This incident caused a great sensation in the whole town of Dunkwa.[12]

Prophecy and Protection

While the promise of healing is clearly the most important factor drawing people into the Spiritist churches, continued participation in church affairs is often seen as a way of remaining close to the source of spiritual power, lest sickness and misfortune strike once again, and membership in the church is felt to afford protection against a host of possible dangers. In varying degrees, the Spiritist churches provide opportunities whereby popular Effutu concerns with visions and divination may continue to find expression. Spiritual revelation ranks second only to healing among the interests of members and is especially emphasized in such churches as M.D.C.C. and Church of the Lord.[13] As in traditional oracular prophecy, the revelations concern this-worldly, practical matters such as economic, social, physical, and mental security.

As revelation, the Holy Spirit can descend upon the faithful when they least expect it, as in a sudden dream or vision, or in the hearing of voices from within or without. But normally revelations come only after careful preparations have been made, usually through prolonged prayer, vigils, or fasts. And while, in theory, spiritual revelations may come to any one of the faithful, in practice it is the pastors and local prophets, or the national leaders of Major Spiritist churches, who are most likely to profess prophetic and visionary powers. In our discussion of church services we described some of the revelations imparted to leaders and members of local assemblies, these revelations being somewhat narrow in scope and dealing usually with matters of immediate concern to assembly members. Pastors and local prophets also claim to seek "spiritual direction" in dealing with various problems of church management, such as the selection of new elders, or the disciplining of errant members. In such matters they pray or fast until "the light of the Holy Spirit" illuminates the problem and points to a solution.

Pastors and local prophets are also consulted by members who wish to have a dream or vision explained to them. This is done on an individual basis and outside the context of group activities, except in the M.D.C.C. This body holds a regular "Spiritual Intercession" each Sunday evening, when the Holy Spirit is invoked for healing and general guidance. Here members relate their dreams and visions in much the same manner as members of the Church of the Lord do during the "messages" phase of their service, but in the "Spiritual Intercession" interpretations and explanations of these revelations are offered by the pastor and his assistant. While much revelation of this kind is solicited by members, local leaders say that when they "see or hear something"

concerning a person they report it to him and offer advice on how to deal with the matter.

In the visions experienced by local leaders the events seen are not regarded as wholly inexorable, however, for often the visions contain the "key" which may prevent the events from coming to pass. Prophet Dugan, for example, recalled one such vision for us:

> While I was praying I had a vision in which I saw some policemen come and handcuff Mr. A because he owed someone 8 Cedis. In the vision I asked for 8 Cedis from the members of my church and paid the money to the policemen, who then left Mr. A alone. The day after I had this vision I invited Mr. A to the church and prescribed for him prayers and a three-day fast in the bush. I did not ask him if he owed any money. Mr. A prayed and fasted as I told him and no misfortune befell him.

If the means of altering the course of events are not indicated in the vision itself, prayer may be resorted to for this purpose, as in the case of the vision experienced by Prophetess Botsie:

> Last Wednesday while I was praying I had a vision in which I saw that one of the Winneba fishing boats would have an accident. I therefore asked the members of the church to pray that the boat would not be wrecked. On the following Friday a fishing boat was indeed wrecked on the beach in accordance with the vision.

When asked why the prayers of her followers had been to no avail, the Prophetess said that, while the prayers had not prevented the boat from being wrecked, they had prevented loss of life in the accident. Anyway, she added in an interesting remark, sometimes what appears to be a bad happening in a vision can be for the best in the end. Jesus, she observed, knew in advance that he would have to drink of "the bitter cup" but did not try to avoid it.

Not all persons who are approached with information and advice from Spiritist leaders respond favorably. Some ignore the warnings but most, it is alleged by the visionaries, go off and seek confirmation from the traditional *Okomfo*, as did the man seen in another vision by Prophetess Botsie:

> Some time ago I went with members of my church to a funeral and while I was there I had a vision. In this vision I saw some bad spirits carrying a brass pan upon their heads. In this brass pan was a dead body—the body of a person from Winneba whom I recognized. Later I spoke to that person and to his family and I asked them to give me candles and I myself offered him blessed lavendar ointment and holy water. This person did not believe me and went with his family to consult an *Okomfo*. The *Okomfo* saw the same thing as I did. He gave him some advice and he did not die.

This is an illuminating statement, for Prophetess Botsie is just as unsympathetic as other Spiritist leaders to the activities of traditional priests and healers, yet here there is an admission that revelations of the Holy Spirit, as well as solutions to the problems it reveals, may be duplicated through traditional methods.

Revelations which are universal in scope, or at least apply to the church as a whole, are made only by the national leaders of the churches. Each year,

for example, Prophet Jehu-Appiah of the M.D.C.C isssues a number of prophecies which he claims were communicated directly to him by God and these "Events for the Year," as he calls them, arouse a great deal of interest, not only among M.D.C.C. members, but also among the general public. In 1968 the Prophet announced the following predictions:

> There shall be rumors and threats of invasions and wars but be not afraid when you hear all these. Many false threats of the wars and rumors of war will rob the world of peace and there shall be no solution to these problems. But you, the children of the Light, will laugh at them because you know, as I have told you, that all such threats are false.
>
> This year many new men shall be called to serve the world and their nations, but pray that the God-fearing triumph. This year shall therefore be a successful year for the ambitious politicians as prospective runners of governments.
>
> You should, however, be guarded against an influence of vain propaganda and vain promises.
>
> Men attempt to bring premature destruction of the world. All space explorations by the world scientists are much more meant for warfare than for peaceful purposes but I the Lord will halt them. I have my own plans for the world. As I have told you this year shall be a prosperous year for the men that trust in me.
>
> There shall be more deaths than as recorded last year but it will not touch you and for this you will be grateful to me.
>
> I am sending three powerful Angels to descend the earth for a special purpose getting to the end of the year and you will feel the effect of their visit on the following year. You should therefore prepare to meet them. There should therefore be special vigils or arranged midnight prayers on 24th October, 24th November, and 24th December.
>
> The Ruling Angel Horniel shall claim the right of some people and give them to those who deserve. The key to effective prayers this year is tidiness and white color.[14]

The head of this church has also encouraged his followers to place their faith in a number of guardian angels who have been sent by God to protect them since 1949:

1949	Bynaba	Justice (Angel of Earthquake).
1950	Mateese	Angel of the Restoration, or One who is to put things in order.
1951	Shaloliel	Angel of Linguistship, or Angel of Emancipation—the Angel who led Moses to Canaan (Angel of Moses).
1952	Rhal-Hatophiel	Wind or Swift (Helper to every Christian).
1953	Rhal-Hatophiel	Wind or Swift (Helper to every Christian).
1954	Nomiel	Grace.
1955	Nomiel	Grace.
1956	Fandiel	Patience.
1957	Madroniel	Nurse or Matron.
1958	Masheeb-Ariel	Fair play.
1959	Mariel	Balance.
1960	Zaniel	Impartial.
1961	Matnaniel	Truth.
1962	Saritoniel	Oppressor.

1963	Uniel	Light.
1964	Zaniel-Anoriel	Slow but Sure.
1965	Farmiel	Liberator.
1966	Maheetiel	Surprise Visitor.
1967	Aheetiel	The Prosecutor.
1968	Horniel	The Usurper.[15]

Turner has alluded to the development, in the Church of the Lord Aladura, of a private cult associated with a hierarchy of angels, to whom candles are burned.[16] We saw no evidence of any similar development in the Winneba assembly of the Church of the Lord and the pastor himself disclaimed any knowledge of such a practice, although he felt that angels might, as God's messengers, appear from time to time in people's dreams and visions. Much the same view was expressed by the pastor of Cherubim and Seraphim, although in Nigeria this church's angelology is a pronounced feature of its belief system.[17]

Notes for Chapter Three

[1]A list of Church of the Lord publications is given in Turner, ibid., vol. 2, pp. 375–78; a comparable list of Cherubim and Seraphim publications is given in Peel, ibid., pp. 316–18. In this respect the Ghanaian bodies generally appear to be very different from otherwise similar bodies in Nigeria, which have been much more prolific producers of church literature.

[2]Turner, ibid., vol. 2, p. 69.

[3]Sundkler, ibid., p. 192.

[4]Sundkler, ibid., p. 191.

[5]Kru songs were noted by Briedenbach in his observation of this church's cup-giving rituals performed at its headquarters. See P. S. Breidenbach, "Spatial Juxtapositions and Belief Orientations in a Ritual of a Ghanaian Healing Movement," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. VII, 1975, pp. 92–110.

[6]Baëta, ibid., p. 58.

[7]Baëta, ibid., p. 63.

[8]Estimate based on head-count of patients at healing sessions.

[9]In addition to consecrated water drawn from a well or tap, some churches also use "Florida Water," which is an imported lavendar water available in most small shops. "Healing rods," made of metal, and wooden crosses, are used during the anointing in the Church of the Lord, Cherubim and Seraphim, and Redeemer Church of God. Consecrated water, as well as being applied externally, is drunk by patients attending healing sessions at St. Anthony Healing Power Church and Waternakaba.

[10]These were the local leaders of M.D.C.C. and African Faith Tabernacle.

[11]This rather "low key" opposition to other forms of treatment may be due, in part, to an awareness that the Ghanaian government has sought to foster a constructive approach to traditional curing techniques, while the development of modern medical facilities is officially part of its modernization drive.

[12]*Almanac of the Christian Church*, Tarkwa, 1969.

[13]On this, see Turner, ibid., vol. 2, pp. 122–40; and Baëta, ibid., p. 64. and Appendix B (2).
[14]*Prophecies*, Mozano, 1968, pp. 1–2.
[15]*Programme, Peaceful Year Celebration*, Mozano, 1967.
[16]Turner, ibid., vol. 2, p. 107.
[17]Peel, ibid., pp. 149–52.

IV

PASTORS AND PROPHETS: 1967–68

The Leadership Role

Those persons who head the local branches of the Major Spiritist churches are, like their counterparts in the orthodox denominations and Pentecostal sects, ordained pastors who have been appointed to positions of leadership by religious superiors, to whom they are formally accountable for the performance of their duties.[1] Their special gifts and talents have been recognized and confirmed through an act of ordination, which sets them apart from the lay members, no matter how "spiritually gifted" some of the latter may be.

As pastors, they may recommend persons for appointment as lay officers, but such appointments normally require the approval of the national leaders of their churches. Only in M.D.C.C. are officers of the assembly elected by the members and not nominated directly by the pastor, but even here the approval of church headquarters is necessary for the confirmation of such appointments. Where the pastor has an assistant or trainee pastor working under his supervision, these are appointed by church headquarters, although a pastor's evaluation is sought by headquarters prior to ordination of these trainees and this serves to enhance the pastor's authority over his assistants. In all but one of the Major Spiritist churches there exist formal mechanisms (e.g., the "Elders Meeting" or the "Leaders Meeting") whereby pastors' decisions may be challenged, but we could uncover no instances in which meetings of lay officers had resulted in such challenges to pastoral authority.

In practice, if not in theory, the position of Spiritist pastors is generally much less secure than that of their counterparts in the orthodox denominations and Pentecostal assemblies. The administrative and financial weakness which is usually apparent in the organizations they represent often forces Spiritist pastors to fall back upon their assemblies for direct support, or to seek remunerative employment in secular occupations.[2] In four Major Spiritist churches in Winneba the pastors receive regular stipends, ranging from 20 Cedis monthly to 35 Cedis monthly, from their respective headquarters. In another the stipend is paid by headquarters after it has received the funds collected at the local branch: if the funds are sufficient, the pastor receives his stipend; if the funds are minimal, the stipend may not be

forthcoming, or may be reduced in amount. In the remaining five Major Spiritist churches the pastors receive no remuneration from headquarters. Some pastors in this position find that the local assembly is unable to provide them with adequate financial support and one works as a basketmaker to supplement his meagre clerical income, while another has had to take a full-time job as a storekeeper in Cape Coast, attending to his religious duties in Winneba only on weekends.

The precarious economic position of most Spiritist pastors can help generate powerful pressures toward secession. Such pastors may come to realize that the work they do as functionaries of churches which fail to provide adequate financial support can be done equally well, if not better, as prophets at the head of their own small groups. A relatively weak national organization, normally lacking in firm central authority, provides little opposition to a pastor bent upon secession. Even as a functionary he is expected to display powerful Spiritual gifts and this enables him to establish that special relationship with assembly members which constitutes an important basis for a personal following.

The Minor Spiritist churches are led by persons we may conveniently refer to as "prophets." They have personal followings, upon whom they rely almost entirely for material support. They have claimed for themselves the powers and prerogatives of leadership and are not accountable to religious superiors for their actions. Their special gifts and talents are recognized and confirmed in dreams and visions and by the prophets' manifest successes as healers and visionaries. While some local prophets have been trained and ordained as pastors in Major Spiritist churches, or have worked as catechists or lay preachers in orthodox denominations, such considerations do not form the basis of their present claims to leadership. On the contrary, most prophets are fond of placing a negative value upon such experiences, especially those relating to previous involvement with orthodox denominations, looking upon them as a final stage of "worldliness" or "darkness" passed through before receiving a personal call to serve as a Spiritist prophet.

These local prophets enjoy sweeping powers within their churches. They personally select and train their assistants and directly appoint (usually after prayer and fasting) those who will act as lay leaders. Their followers possess no formal devices for challenging their decisions and actions, but this does not mean that prophets operate without constraints of any kind. The prophet's position is secure only as long as he continues to impress his followers with his spiritual powers and maintains his standing as healer and visionary among many competitors. And since he relies so heavily upon his followers for material support, he cannot afford to disregard their wishes entirely and most local prophets are well aware of the need to conform, to some extent at least, to the expectations of their followers. They frequently refer to the care they must exercise in avoiding "unseemly conduct" and "places of ill-repute" and

one prophet explained that he rarely left his premises because his followers felt that he should always be on hand in case of trouble.

Local Spiritist leaders, whether pastors or prophets, represent and personify their groups to a degree which is seldom matched by local religious leaders in western societies and their role as *exemplar* owes its pronounced character, we believe, to three principal factors:

a) *The Minority Status of Spiritists*: Spiritists, like other Christians, are a self-conscious minority in a town such as Winneba and, as such, look to their leaders for exemplary conduct which will epitomize their conception of the Christian life for those who may be hostile, sceptical, or indifferent to its claims and standards. As a somewhat peripheral and suspect "minority-within-a-minority," the Spiritists are perhaps more vulnerable than most to the criticisms of non-Christians and they also have to contend with criticism directed at them from other, "more respectable" Christian bodies.

b) *The Charismatic Emphasis in Spiritism*: There is a decided *charismatic* emphasis in the relationship between leader and members in Spiritist churches.[3] Despite the existence of certain "gifted" members and the possibilities of spiritual benefits flowing from individual prayer and other, more or less private, acts on the part of ordinary members, it is upon the demonstrated success of the local leader as *thaumaturge* that the assembly's continued existence primarily depends. This is not to suggest that a local branch will survive and flourish only if it has an impressive thaumaturge as its leader. But the absence of such a person at the head of the local assembly would have to be compensated for by the spiritual powers and public reputation of a prestigious national head, preferably with headquarters situated at no great distance from Winneba: otherwise, it is much too easy for disaffected Spiritists to switch their allegiance and loyalty to an apparently more effective Spiritist leader in the immediate locality.

In dwelling upon the thaumaturgical aspects of the Spiritist leader's role and the charismatic emphasis in his relations with followers or members, we do not mean to underplay the importance of those organizational skills which are required, in varying degrees, by such leaders. In some of the very small assemblies the requirements in this respect appear to be very slight indeed, while in many of the larger assemblies they can be less easily discounted, yet rather easily exaggerated. For many churches have succeeded in creating patterns of organization which, at the formal and theoretical level, are elaborate and impressive, yet in practice have much more of an "anything goes" quality to them. This contrast between organizational theory and practice has also been noted by Baëta, who suggests that the theory is derived mainly from the "historical churches" (our "orthodox denominations") and the practice from the pattern of organization in African communities generally. This practical pattern is, in contrast to the theoretical or "official" pattern:

> . . . less hard-and-fast in the application of principles, rules and regulations, of protocol and "good order," particularly at assemblies; it centers around the strong personality of its leader, who is its real pivot, though use is made of all sorts of councils as well. . . . The development of organization in this direction is natural and inevitable since, in any case, there are as yet only a relatively few people who are sufficiently conversant with Western patterns and ways to feel at home in them.[4]

c) *The Use of Traditional Authority Paradigms*: There is a fairly noticeable tendency on the part of Spiritists to bestow upon their leaders many of the attributes associated with traditional leadership roles and to accord them the kind of respect and esteem traditionally due to those possessed of esoteric knowledge and skills. Sundkler has distinguished between the "chief type" and "prophet type" among leaders of Zulu separatist churches, the former being found typically in churches of the "Ethiopian" variety (i.e., Bantu churches which resulted from primary secessions arising out of prestige and power struggles, but retaining much of mission doctrine and practice) and the latter in the "Zionist" churches (i.e., Bantu churches which are preoccupied with healing, visions, and other dramatic forms of Pentecostalism and whose beliefs and practices are markedly syncretist).[5] Certain similarities undoubtedly exist between the Zionist churches and the Spiritist churches, and between the Ethiopians and groups such as A.M.E.Zion, Church of Pentecost, and Christ Revival Church, yet South African separatism is a product of particular socio-historical configurations which were not present in Ghana, and as *types* these churches have little practical utility for our own study.

With regard to leadership types, we see certain parallels between Sundkler's "chief type" and the pastors of the non-Spiritist bodies, although the correspondence is not an exact one. The primary requirements for a leader of the "chief type" are *prestige* and *bravery*, the former being expressed in the leader's bulky physical appearance and reserved manner, and the latter being demonstrated primarily in his opposition to white domination.[6] In Winneba the non-Spiritist pastor is expected to behave with the grave dignity of a chief without necessarily having the commanding physical presence of the latter;[7] he is expected to be steadfast in his calling, but his resolve is more likely to be demonstrated in opposition to "paganism" than in anti-European acts or pronouncements.[8] The correspondence is much closer, however, between the Zionist "prophet type" and the Spiritist leader, for the former is described by Sundkler as a modification of the chieftaincy or kingship pattern through its combination with that of the Zulu *isangoma*, who was a diviner or witch-finder. In the case of local Spiritist leaders, the combination appears to be primarily that of the chief and the *Okomfo*, the priest who can converse directly and intimately with his god. But like the traditional *Osofo*, he also acts as special pleader, or presenter of personal petitions, for the church members and others who approach him.[9]

It is one thing to point out these similarities and parallels, but it is quite another to specify precisely how much of the leader's role has been shaped by an awareness of traditional authority paradigms and how much has been informed by an African interpretation of biblical prophetism. Many local leaders recognize that they occupy positions which are analogous, in certain respects, to that of the chief or clan elder and observe that this is only one of many similarities which exist between their own social arrangements and those of "the people of the Bible." But they vehemently reject any suggestion of comparability between themselves and traditional magico-religious practitioners who, they say, serve "false gods" whereas their own mission is clearly attested to in both the Old Testament accounts of the prophets and the New Testament descriptions of Jesus' prophetic ministry.

In discussing the fit between the Spiritist leadership role and traditional forms of authority, it must be said that, despite its closeness, there are several aspects of the role which have only the most tenuous connections with traditional authority paradigms. Most notable in this regard are the pastoral aspects *per se*, those duties which the leader performs in his capacity as "the shepherd of the flock" and which include such things as counselling members, visiting the homes of the sick or distressed, persuading those whose involvement in church affairs has slipped or lapsed, etc. These aspects are much more pronounced in the work of those leaders we refer to as "pastors" than in that of the local "prophets." But just as Spiritist pastors perform "prophetic" functions, so too do Spiritist prophets perform "pastoral" functions in varying degrees. In doing so, they appear to be perpetuators of a Christian tradition inherited, directly or indirectly, from the missions, rather than acting as modern interpreters of the traditional African conception of the chief as "father to his people."

Social Characteristics

In examining the social characteristics (and, in the next section, the career development) of local Spiritist leaders, we shall find it useful to compare them on a number of points with their counterparts in the other local churches.[10] In this way we may be able to see if Spiritist churches attract to their ministries people who differ in any important respect from those who lead branches of non-Spiritist churches and also discover what, if anything, is distinctive about the process of becoming a Spiritist leader.

a) *Sex and Age*: In the Spiritist churches, as in most other local Christian assemblies, women greatly outnumber men among the members, yet only three of the leaders whose biographies we obtained are women. They were the only female leaders of Christian assemblies in the town.

The average age of Spiritist leaders is forty and this is lower than the general average for local church leaders. The relative youth of Spiritist pastors

may partly reflect the shorter period of training for the Spiritist ministry as against, say, the orthodox denominational ministries; it is also a reflection of the fact that, for six of the Spiritist pastors, Winneba was their first "parish" after ordination. This is very different from the pattern found among the pastors of orthodox denominations, all of whom are men of considerable experience. It would appear that Spiritist churches are fairly willing to send to Winneba quite young and inexperienced pastors in the hope, perhaps, that their youth and energy may attract potential members; but for the orthodox denominations Winneba is a town with a long history of mainstream Christianity and one to which younger pastors are unlikely to be sent, except as assistants to more experienced resident pastors.

b) *Nationality and Tribe*: With the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, which is locally in the hands of Dutch priests of the Society of the Divine Word, all the churches in Winneba are led by Africans. The local leader of the Seventh-Day Adventist assembly, a Creole born in Sierra Leone, is the only one of these who is not also a Ghanaian. Only eight church leaders, however, are Effutu and, of these, six are found heading Spiritist assemblies. The congregations of the orthodox denominations are all led by non-Effutu, the bodies they represent tending to stress their national or international outlook and generally ignore the tribal factor in arranging postings for their pastors. The Pentecostal sects, which are well-acquainted with schism and secession, do take into account the tribal affiliations of their pastors and try, as far as possible, to arrange that they do not serve for extended periods in their home areas. Major Spiritist churches, in contrast, have often sought to harness local and tribal sentiment in the initial formation of branches, and new ordinands or trainee pastors are frequently sent to their home towns or villages to try to gain a foothold in an area where competitors have already established assemblies. For churches seeking to gain a foothold in an area such as this, the tactic may yield short-term gains and, in addition, enhance the confidence of the younger pastor. But in the event of friction between the pastor and his superiors, localism and tribalism can turn out to be a double-edged sword and be turned against the central authorities. It would seem, paradoxically perhaps, that there is a greater likelihood of this occurring if the leader has indeed succeeded in exploiting local and tribal sentiment and has acquired, in the process, a favorable self-image as a religious leader.

For those who form their own Spiritist churches, the home town or village presents obvious advantages as a starting location and it is not surprising that most of the Major Spiritist churches in the country appear to have originated as purely local movements among people of the same tribe as the founder.[11] Of the five Minor Spiritist churches found in Winneba, four were founded by Effutu; the sole exception is the Christ Divine Healing Church, whose founder was born not far from Winneba and has spent most of his life in the town. The presence of kinsfolk is clearly an important

consideration when prophets decide to plant churches in their home areas, since the fate of a new Spiritist group is always uncertain during the early, formative years. For the struggling prophet, relatives and friends may hold out the promise of a measure of economic support during this critical phase in the life of the church.

c) *Parents' Occupations*: Over one-half of the Spiritist leaders had fathers who were either farmers or fishermen. The figures are too small to permit safe comparisons with each of the other types of church leader, but we may note that it is only among the fathers of Pentecostal leaders (the type of leader whose role is, perhaps, closest to that of the Spiritist) that a greater preponderance of persons in such occupations (relative to the size of the samples) is to be found. While fathers of Spiritist pastors account for three of the seven persons in professional and clerical occupations, the figures generally point to a somewhat lower socio-economic background for Spiritist (and Pentecostal) leaders than for other local church leaders.

Over three-quarters of the Spiritist leaders had mothers who were petty-traders or food-sellers, an occupational group which is well represented among mothers of other church leaders also. Since we do not know a great deal about the actual scale of the trading and selling operations of these mothers, it would be unwise to draw any firm conclusions from the data. Among Ghanaian women, non-involvement in economic activities outside the home is sometimes a sign of high social status and here we see that it is only among mothers of denominational pastors that such unemployed housewives are located. In general, however, the differences between the occupations of Spiritist leaders' mothers and those of other leaders' mothers are not of a marked nature.

d) *Parents' Religion*: Over one-half of Spiritist leaders had fathers who had been born pagans, although in three cases a father had experienced conversion to either Christianity (two) or Islam (one) before the leader's birth; three fathers subsequently were converted from paganism to Spiritism, in two cases at the hands of their children after the latter had become Spiritist leaders. A somewhat similar pattern of religious affiliation is evident for mothers of Spiritist leaders. The picture is rather different for parents of other local church leaders, only one of whom was born a pagan. Of the seven Spiritist leaders who were born of Christian (by birth or conversion) parents, all are pastors and the parents in question were all affiliated with orthodox denominations.

e) *Leaders' Education*: Almost two-thirds of Spiritist leaders have received some degree of formal education in western-type (usually denominationally-managed) schools. The general level of education among

Spiritist pastors, over three-quarters of whom have attended school, is higher than that of Spiritist prophets.[12] Indeed, it compares favorably with that of Pentecostal pastors, none of whom has attained a level of education reached by three of the nine Spiritist pastors. Literacy in English is a requirement for entry to the denominational ministries and the Pentecostal sects (with the exception of Christ Apostolic Church). While no such requirement exists in the Spiritist churches in Winneba, local leaders—and particularly the local prophets, whose educational level is relatively low—generally insist that their churches' greatest need at the present time is "intellectuals who will build up the church." For the most part, however, the educational experience of most Spiritist leaders would seem to be of a kind likely to raise levels of aspiration and expectation, rather than providing the sort of training that could turn hopes into realities.[13]

f) *Leaders' Previous Occupations*: All of the Spiritist leaders had worked for a time in secular occupations before embarking on their religious careers. This is true also of all other local church leaders, with the exception of the Roman Catholic priest, who began his training for the priesthood after leaving school in his native Holland. While all of the female Spiritist leaders had worked as traders or small-scale retailers, nine of the eleven male Spiritist leaders had been engaged in various kinds of craft and manual occupations. This would seem to follow fairly naturally from their general level of schooling, which helps turn them away from such occupations as farming and fishing—the kinds of activities in which most of their fathers were engaged—but does not qualify them fully for employment in clerical or professional occupations.

Career Development

a) *Conversion to Christianity*: As we have already seen, some seven of the fourteen Spiritist leaders were born to parents who were Christian by birth (five) or conversion (two), in all cases parents being affiliated with orthodox denominations (five Methodists and two Roman Catholics). Leaving such leaders aside for the moment, we consider first the remaining seven who were born to parents who were either pagans (six) or Moslems (one).

With the exception of the childhood conversion of the Twelve Apostles pastor, none of the conversions which took place among leaders in this category was the direct result of parental influence. Parents of such leaders, it seems, are more likely to be converted by their children than to be instrumental in introducing them to Christian churches which they themselves have joined. In two cases, however, we see that relatives have been influential in bringing about the first formal contacts between leaders and Christian churches: the uncle of Prophet Oben and the aunt of Prophetess

Quansah, the Waternakaba founder, both took the first steps in introducing these leaders to Christian churches.

Prophet Mensah, leader of Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple, became a Methodist when he attended a Methodist school, although his parents were Moslems. The circumstances surrounding the remaining conversions are more obscure: Pastor Tabil of African Faith Tabernacle appears to have engaged in that kind of personal search which, in the terminology of contemporary western youth culture, is known as "finding one's self" and this led him to embrace Islam and later Methodism. Prophetess Botsie of the Redeemer Church of God experienced difficulties during adolescence, these being interpreted first by her parents in terms of a traditionalist view of spirit-possession and later, by a Spiritist pastor (and, eventually, by herself) in terms of a Spiritist conception of the workings of the Holy Spirit:

> During my adolescence I sometimes behaved as if a spirit was in possession of me. My parents thought that I was being taken by one of the gods to serve as its *Okomfo*. I consulted the pastor of the Church of the Lord about this and he told me that it was not a bad spirit that was hunting me, but a good spirit. So I decided to become a member of the church.

Prophet Dugan, for his part, encountered what seems to be the usual sort of difficulties experienced when working away from home in a strange town (Koforidua) and, following the advice of his cousin, joined the Methodist church there.

In various ways, then, we find that most of these Spiritist leaders (the only exceptions being Prophetess Botsie and Pastor Donkor of the Twelve Apostles) were initially converted into orthodox denominations, the step to Spiritism being taken at a later stage in their religious careers.

b) *Becoming a Spiritist*: We now turn to examine those factors which appear to have prompted leaders to turn away from the orthodox denominations with which they were first affiliated and to embrace Spiritism. By far the most important single factor here is the perceived "lack of spirituality" in the orthodox denominations, manifested in their inability to offer, or refusal to countenance, spiritual healing and protection as part of church activities. For no fewer than ten of the twelve leaders whose initial Christian affiliations were with orthodox denominations, issues relating to healing and protection from misfortune were involved, directly or indirectly, in their move toward Spiritism.

Pastor Tabil (African Faith Tabernacle), Pastor Botsie (Divine Healer's Church), Pastor Oben (Divine Healing Church), and Prophet Mensah (Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple) all joined Spiritist churches after being healed by Spiritist leaders, while Prophetess Quansah (Waternakaba) had her first direct contact with Spiritism by way of a healing consultation at St. Anthony Healing Power Church, although she did not join this particular body. Pastor

Bennett of the M.D.C.C. and Pastor Prah of Life and Salvation Church joined Spiritist churches after seeking spiritual protection from misfortunes which had either occurred, or were thought likely to occur. Prophet Oben (Christ Divine Healing Church) and Prophet Dugan left orthodox denominations after their own personal healing activities had brought them into disfavor with church authorities, while Pastor Hagan (Christian Church) joined his uncle when the latter was banished by the Methodist church because of his spiritual healing activities.

The kinds of problems which led these persons to consult Spiritist healers are not always easy to determine, since they are described by the former sufferers in quite simple terms, such as "severe pains in my chest," or "bad dreams," terms which tend to focus, naturally enough, on symptoms rather than physiological or psychological causes. Without intending to suggest that all of these problems had a psychosomatic quality, some do appear to be closely related to personal stress situations. Prophetess Quansah's "palpitations and heart trouble," which led her to seek help at St. Anthony Healing Power Church, appear to be linked to her situation as an unmarried woman of thirty-three, and she made a point of telling us that she was married soon after this visit to "Power." Pastor Botsie's "bad dreams" drove her to a Spiritist church shortly after the break-up of her marriage; and we see that Pastor Tabil and Pastor Oben both went for treatment following changes in their employment. A pattern of occupational shifts, usually accompanied by geographical mobility, is apparent in the biographies of several of the leaders, for most of whom the initial contact with Spiritism is made at a place outside their home towns or villages.

c) *Becoming a Spiritist Leader*: For many of the individuals in our sample, joining a Spiritist church also marks the beginning of their training for the ministry. Indeed, it is remarkable how few of them had any lengthy experience as ordinary members of the churches whose ministries they sought to enter. Of the twelve leaders who trained for the Spiritist ministry at some time in their careers (all the leaders in the sample, except Prophet Oben and Prophetess Quansah), only five had been ordinary members prior to the commencement of training, usually for very limited periods of time.

In explaining their decisions to enter the ministry, some six of the twelve leaders in question gave accounts which included dreams, visions, or some other spiritual experience of a directive nature. The most common form which this experience takes is for the person to dream that he sees himself acting the role of pastor alongside some established Spiritist leader, or to feel the Holy Spirit "pushing" him toward a particular church or prophet. Occasionally the call is experienced in visions or dreams which are more vividly dramatic, as in the case of Bishop Arthur of Cherubim and Seraphim:

> . . . in this dream I saw the whole town of Cape Coast in flames. There was nobody strong enough to put out the flames. Then I appeared as the saviour of the town. I

> built a mighty house and the people of Cape Coast rushed into the house to escape the fire. But soon the house became so crowded that I could not enter it. As I stood at the entrance to my house, I saw the town continued to burn, with many people who could not reach its shelter dying in the flames. Then I saw a very high mountain. I raised my hands in prayer and, as I did so, saw the flames gradually die. Now, with my hands raised on high and the flames losing their heat, I managed to climb to the top of the mountain, and, while I prayed, someone handed me a white cassock and a rod. Stretching out my hands, I accepted these gifts.

The remaining six leaders offered accounts of their entry to the ministry which made no mention of dreams, visions, or other manifestations of a divine call, placing more stress upon such things as the example or encouragement of relatives, or gratitude for a successful personal healing.

The actual period of time spent in training for the Spiritist ministry is highly variable, ranging from six years in the case of Pastor Donkor (Twelve Apostles) to only one year for Pastor Bennett (M.D.C.C.).[14] Previous experience as a catechist or lay preacher in an orthodox denomination does not necessarily result in a shorter-than-average period of training for the Spiritist ministry; Prophet Mensah was ordained after only one year of training with the Divine Healer's Church, while Pastor Hagan had to train for four years in his uncle's church, although both had been Methodist catechists. The date of ordination is in all cases determined by the church head, not according to any rigid timetable, but according to his evaluation of the trainee's spiritual and moral progress, together with his assessment of the opportunities available for placing new ordinands in existing assemblies or for opening up new branches in other parts of the country. The training itself is practical, rather than theoretical, consisting almost entirely of "on-the-job" experience of work in assemblies under the direction of an experienced pastor, although in some cases the church leader directly supervises the initial training at headquarters.

Of the five local prophets operating in Winneba, only Prophetess Quansah (Waternakaba) founded her church without prior experience of either the Spiritist ministry or lay leadership in an orthodox denomination. This woman, like Prophet Oben (Christ Divine Healing Church), was never a member of any Spiritist church; the other three, however, had been Spiritist pastors or assistant pastors before striking out on their own. Prophet Oben, despite his particular disability and the advanced age at which he became an independent prophet (sixty-four years), is a fairly typical example of the Ghanaian Spiritist church founder—the man who persists in trying to practice Spiritism within an orthodox denomination and meets with the usual responses: discouragement, warnings, and finally the ultimatum. Prophet Dugan and Prophetess Botsie both broke away from Spiritist churches after apparently unsuccessful bids for power within their particular assemblies, while Prophet Mensah, an ambitious young man, seems to have felt that he

could do better as an independent prophet and make a start on the building of what he hoped would become a strong, national church.[15]

In none of these cases where independent prophets sprang from the Spiritist ministries was there any indication of a *doctrinal* dispute between budding prophets and their superiors. Prophets may emerge from the orthodox denominations after doctrinal disputes over the place of healing in the church, but prophets who emerge from the ranks of the Spiritist ministry appear to be driven by a fairly straightforward and not necessarily ignoble desire to be master, or mistress, in one's own house.

Notes for Chapter Four

[1]They are known to church members by a variety of titles—"Brother," "Sister," "Bishop," or "*Osofo*"—but the term "Pastor" is the one most frequently used.

[2]This is also true among the ranks of traditional Effutu priests, many of whom engage in fishing or farming.

[3]As Wilson has pointed out, *charisma* is a sociological, rather than a psychological, concept and expresses a quality of relationship rather than of person. B. R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millenium*, Heinemann, London, 1973, p. 499.

[4]Baëta, ibid., pp. 128–29.

[5]Sundkler, ibid., pp. 106–9.

[6]Sundkler, ibid., p. 107.

[7]Most of them are men of average height and physique.

[8]During the last decade of the 19th century the Methodist church produced a number of ministers, including Egyir-Assam and Attoh-Ahuma, who were active and vocal in the struggle for national independence.

[9]The term *Okomfo* is not applied to Spiritist leaders.

[10]Biographies were obtained from leaders of all local Spiritist churches (with the exception of the pastor of St. Anthony Healing Power Church, who had to leave Winneba mid-way through the research period) and the leaders of all non-Spiritist churches (with the exception of the Jehovah's Witnesses' leader, who refused to be interviewed).

[11]This appears to be the case with all five of the major groups discussed in Baëta, ibid.

[12]Here we consider only the type of school last attended and not the standard or form reached in school.

[13]The effects on unemployment from "massive increases in the outflow from primary and middle schools" is treated in P. J. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965, pp. 202–9.

[14]Pastor Bennett was formerly a pastor in the African Orthodox Catholic Church, which his father had joined while living in Bonny, Nigeria.

[15]He was, in this connection, very anxious that I help him establish an affiliation with some appropriate North American religious organization.

V

THE SPIRIT-SEEKERS: 1967–68

Membership Size

The compilation of reliable membership statistics for the Spiritist churches is unusually difficult, since most assemblies do not maintain membership registers or rolls. An outstanding exception in this regard is the M.D.C.C., whose membership records are compiled with a care and thoroughness which compares favorably with that found in the major denominations. Three other churches (Church of the Lord, Life and Salvation Church, and Christ Divine Healing Church) had membership rolls which were slightly out of date, but which could be corrected fairly easily in the course of consultations with recording secretaries. In the remaining groups no membership records were kept and the relevant information had to be obtained directly from the leaders and some of the more senior members.[1]

In some of the smaller assemblies the absence of membership records is accounted for by leaders who liken their assemblies to families, the members of which are all known intimately to each other, making the formal record both unnecessary and inappropriate. In this category are Dugan's Church and Waternakaba, where a substantial core of the membership consists of persons who are close relatives. In others, however, the inability to produce some kind of membership register for inspection was clearly a source of embarrassment for the leaders, and here it was explained that the assembly in question lacked a literate member with the time and interest to perform the duties of recording secretary. A third response was for leaders to point to the difficulties of keeping an accurate account of their members in view of the fluid and unstable nature of Spiritist church membership. This point was made very well by Prophetess Botsie, who said that her church was "like a railway train which stops at many stations, with some people getting off and others getting on."

In 1967 nearly 80% of Winneba's 1,212 Spiritists were to be found in the Major Spiritist churches, with the Twelve Apostles accounting for some 20% of the total. This particular church had four assemblies in the town, three of which were situated quite close together, and no attempt had been made to combine the membership in one large assembly. The average size of Spiritist assemblies was 67.3 members, that of Major Spiritist groups being greater (73.9 members) than the Minor Spiritist bodies (50.2 members).

Full Members

a) *Eligibility*: In the orthodox denominations and Pentecostal sects "Full Members" are persons who have been baptized, confirmed as communicants, and who are eligible to hold lay office in their congregations. A somewhat similar definition of full membership obtains in the Spiritist churches, but here, as we shall see shortly, a person's status as polygynist does not automatically exclude him from full membership, as it would in the non-Spiritist churches.

The process of becoming a full member varies from one Spiritist church to another. Only three bodies (M.D.C.C., Church of the Lord, and Cherubim and Seraphim) offer any systematic course of instruction for probationers, that of the M.D.C.C. being a modified form of the Methodist system, while the other two churches follow closely the schemes in use in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. In two Spiritist churches (Christ Divine Healing Church and African Faith Tabernacle) all who come for healing or "spiritual help" are first baptized, even if they have not clearly stated their intention to seek a regular connection with the church. In the remaining groups those offering themselves for baptism are placed on probation for a short period, normally three to four weeks, during which time they receive no formal instruction but are "under observation" by the pastor or local prophet; if they attend services regularly during this period, conduct themselves in an inoffensive manner, and abide by the rules of the church, they are then invited to make a public confession of their sins as a prelude to baptism. In none of the Spiritist churches are converts from other churches required to undergo a second baptism, although the vast majority of such recruits voluntarily seek Spiritist baptism.

In most Spiritist churches baptism is by immersion, either in the sea or in the Ayensu river, the rite normally being conducted at dawn on a Sunday morning. Persons seeking baptism in St. Anthony Healing Power Church, however, are required to make the journey to church headquarters at Attuapokeh, since only Prophet Mannor, the head of the church, may administer the rite. In two Minor Spiritist churches (Christ Divine Healing Church and Waternakaba) baptism assumes a different form, with the candidate being washed from head to toe in "holy water." This technique bears a remarkable resemblance to the traditional Effutu "medicine bath" which precedes many important Effutu ceremonies, including the installation of a new *Omanhene*.

Communion in the Spiritist churches is held once every three or four weeks, except in African Faith Tabernacle, where it takes place only once every three months. Again, the actual forms are in nearly all cases modifications of the major denominational practice—Anglican in the Church of the Lord, Roman Catholic in Cherubim and Seraphim and St. Anthony Healing Power Church, and Methodist in all other groups save Waternakaba.

In this small church, communion involves the drinking of "holy water" from a calabash which is ceremoniously passed among the members; as practiced in Waternakaba, the communion rite appears to be an adaptation of the traditional rite of hospitality which is conducted in Effutu homes when visitors are received and welcomed.

With regard to polygyny, there are two different approaches to be observed at the level of "official policy": in four Minor Spiritist churches (Dugan's Church, Redeemer Church of God, Waternakaba, and Christ Divine Healing Church) polygynists are welcomed into full membership and no attempt is made to discourage men from taking additional wives, nor women from marrying men who already have one or more wives; in the remaining Spiritist churches polygynists who join the assembly are not barred from full membership, but unmarried or monogamously married converts are officially required to avoid polygyny if they desire to attain or maintain full membership rights. This "double standard" is defended by local leaders who say that it would be "too hard" a policy to require polygynous converts to sever marital ties or renounce obligations previously contracted, while it is "fair and reasonable" to expect adherence to the monogamous ideal from those who committed themselves to Christianity while they were unmarried, or monogamously married.

In practice, the double standard is extremely difficult to enforce in any systematic way and it has sometimes proved to be a source of resentment for a few younger men who, even if they are not contemplating polygyny, feel that they are being unfairly discriminated against. The result is a somewhat loose application of policy, verging upon total disregard for it in most Spiritist churches. It is not enforced upon polygynously married women in any of Winneba's Spiritist churches, it being widely assumed that there is a large surplus of women in the community and that it is preferable for women to marry polygynously than to go through life as spinsters.[2] The M.D.C.C., like other churches which officially operate with the double standard, insists upon monogamy for its married clergy and appears to be serious and consistent in its application of this principle. But despite its efforts to regulate and restrict the practice of polygyny among its members (through pastoral counselling and an official policy requiring members to have their marriages approved by church headquarters), this church in Winneba has not rigorously enforced the double standard.

For most local Spiritists the solution to the problem of polygyny is seen to lie in the future when, through the steadfast example set by pastors, or as the financial costs of contracting polygynous marriages becomes prohibitive, monogamy will naturally come to prevail over the traditional polygynous ideal. Given this expectation, departures from official rules and policies relating to marriage do not occasion a great deal of concern. The present is seen as a time of transition and current marriage practices are held to reflect the changing and confused times. Some leaders, while sharing in the general

expectation that polygyny will eventually disappear, argue that it may be a culturally appropriate and morally acceptable form for some African Christians at the present time. Once again the articulate leader of the Redeemer Church of God put this argument most clearly when she suggested that:

> Our churches are African churches and must cater to the needs of Africans. I feel that it is much better that a man has several wives, provided that he can look after them well, than that he marries only one wife and has several mistresses.

d) *Duration of Membership*: Compared with members of other churches in Winneba, very few Spiritists are people who were born into membership of their churches. As one might expect, this type of Spiritist is found more frequently in the older of the Major Spiritist churches, but even here their numbers are not large. A major contributing factor would seem to be the total absence of Spiritist church schools in the locality, for without them the Spiritists lack an important agency of religious recruitment and socialization. In this respect they stand in sharp contrast to the major denominations, which have a history of heavy involvement in education, with the result that even the Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations (which originated in Winneba only a few years before M.D.C.C. and St. Anthony Healing Power Church) have much higher proportions of "members-from-birth" than either of these early Spiritist assemblies. Not only are Winneba's Spiritist assemblies composed largely of converts, but we find also that the vast majority of these converts have been members of their churches for a comparatively short period of time.

c) *Social Composition*: Some two-thirds of Winneba's church members are women, with the imbalance being greatest in the Spiritist churches, where women account for over 75% of the full members. There can be little doubt that these churches hold a special attraction for women and that their appeal is based largely upon the importance they attach to matters which are of particular concern to women. In their attention to such things as pregnancy, barrenness, child health, and witchcraft, these churches address problems which are often a source of great anxiety for many ordinary Effutu women. Moreover, the Spiritist church generally offers women many opportunities of attaining special status as lay officers, or of demonstrating their possession of spiritual gifts in some way. In these respects the Spiritist churches may function in a manner similar to those "peripheral possession cults" described by Lewis, in which socially subordinate or deprived persons are able to escape, temporarily, the normal obligations and responsibilities which have to be met.[3]

An additional, though less important, factor attracting women to these churches may be the enthusiastic and spontaneous style of worship they encourage. Theirs is an atmosphere in which women appear to feel much more

at home than men; during Spiritist services it is noticeable that the behavior of men is generally more restrained than that of women and that they seem less likely to participate in the dancing or to display the more overt forms of "possession behavior," such as rolling, spinning, or writhing on the floor; and when they do dance or move around during services, they tend to do so in a more controlled manner, as if conscious of the need to maintain traditional standards of dignified male decorum.

In all types of churches in Winneba the majority of members are persons in the two middle age groups (25–64 years) with the Spiritists being heavily concentrated in the 25–44 years age group. Few Spiritist churches in town have been in existence long enough to have acquired large numbers of long-standing members of advanced years, or a sizeable group of young adults who were born into their churches. The bulk of the Spiritist membership appears to consist of persons in that age group where the various problems of mature adulthood—job security, child-birth and child-rearing, personal and family health, etc.—may be experienced most acutely.

Turner has cautioned against the expectation of a close association between membership in West African independent churches and low socio-economic status, arguing that the appeal of these bodies is normally much wider than that of most western religious "sects."[4] In one sense, the caution may be appropriate, for these churches are much less exclusive in their self-conception than are bodies we normally refer to as "sects" and allow for a range of personal affiliations quite apart from that involved in full membership. It is certainly the case that the appeal of the local Spiritist churches is not limited to farmers, fishermen, or petty-traders and that, among the more peripheral members, there are sometimes persons from professional occupations. This fact notwithstanding, it is also evident in Turner's study of the Church of the Lord that the number of "upper-class" or "elite" individuals attached to the church is quite small and that their involvement usually stops short of seeking full membership status.[5] This is true also of the Spiritist churches, among whose full members we find few persons of high socio-economic status.

In a sample of male members of a Cherubim and Seraphim congregation in Ibadan, Nigeria, Peel found no persons engaged in the "higher professions" (e.g., doctors or lawyers) and such persons are similarly absent in the Spiritist churches;[6] but the Ibadan sample did include 29% who were clerks or teachers, 22% who were traders or contractors, and none who were engaged in farming or traditional crafts. Clearly, the Ibadan congregation consisted of persons of a generally higher socio-economic status than the typical Winneba Spiritist.

The socio-economic background of Winneba's Spiritists stands in fairly sharp contrast to that of most other types of local churches, with the exception of the Pentecostal sects. The major denominations and the American sects display similar occupational profiles as far as their male memberships are

concerned with relatively few persons engaged in farming and fishing; but among women members it may be observed that the denominations have the only professional workers (mainly teachers and nurses), while most of the women members of the American sects are engaged in petty trading.

Data on members' occupations provides a broad impression of the relationship between type of church and the social status of members, but this does not tell the whole story. Professional and white-collar workers are certainly to be found among the members of the Pentecostal and American sect assemblies, but these groups contain no members of the local elite. Among all church members in the town there were twelve persons who could readily be identified as belonging to the traditional elite, and nine of these were members of orthodox denominations: the *Omanhene* and an *Asafo* captain are Methodist lay preachers; the *Tufuhene* (commander-in-chief of the two *Asafo* companies) is a member of the Anglican church and the *Okyeame* (linguist, or spokesman, for the *Omanhene*) is a member of the A.M.E.Zion church; in the Roman Catholic church we find two *Asafo* captains and two divisional chiefs: the remaining three Christian members of the traditional elite, all of whom are *Asafo* captains, are members of Spiritist churches. The most important and influential community leaders of the modern type are all to be found in the congregations of the major denominations, whose memberships include all the town's doctors, lawyers, and principals of schools and training colleges; here too are all ten members of the Town Development Committee, seven of whom are members of the Methodist church.

An interesting topographical indicator of church status is provided by the municipal cemetery, which is situated on a hill on the eastern outskirts of the town. On the crest of the hill the cemetery contains separate plots for each of the orthodox denominations, among which the Methodist plot stands out clearly with the most elaborate and ornate headstones. Where the hill begins to slope gently down to the north and east we find the plots of the American and Pentecostal sects, and here the headstones are much less impressive and expensive-looking. At the bottom of the hill, in flat, marshy ground which floods during the rains, is an area used by the Spiritist churches, as well as by the pagan population of the town. The distribution of church plots reflects fairly accurately the historical evolution of local Christianity, with the later arrivals staking their territories at successively lower points on the hill; it also represents a fairly realistic relief map of Winneba Christianity which shows its various units and their status positions within the local Christian hierarchy. Other external signs of church status are to be seen in the physical appearance of the church buildings, the dress of those who attend services, and the mode of transportation used by church members.[7]

With the exception of the American sects, Effutu form a majority in all *types* of churches, though not necessarily a majority in each congregation or assembly. The two oldest denominations in town, the Methodist and

A.M.E.Zion churches, have succeeded in transforming themselves from "strangers' churches" with mainly Fanti members into more ethnically heterogenous bodies; Effutu now account for 76% of the Methodist and 82% of A.M.E.Zion full membership. Those major denominations which began to develop in Winneba in more recent times, however, have not succeeded to the same degree in shaking off their old tribal identifications. Less than 50% of the members of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations are Effutu; and in the Presbyterian church the majority of members are from eastern tribes such as the Ga, Akwapim, and Ewe, with only 16% Effutu.

The very small American-based sects began in Winneba with charter memberships containing very few Effutu and tended to retain this character in late 1967. Significantly, perhaps, the more outward-going Seventh-Day Adventists now have a majority of their members who are Effutu, while the introversionist First Century Gospel has remained a predominantly Fanti sect in Winneba. Most Pentecostal and Spiritist assemblies began in town with charter members who were mainly Effutu and the tribal composition of most of these groups had changed little by 1967. Among the localized, Minor Spiritist bodies there were two assemblies—Waternakaba and Redeemer Church of God—whose members were all Effutu.

Peripheral Members

Among the members of the Spiritist churches are persons known variously as "Probationers," "New Members," or "Members-on-Trial" if they are recent converts to the church, or "Sympathizers," "Supporters," or "Adherents" if they have been connected with the church for some time. These members do not partake of communion and they are not eligible to hold lay office in the church. The recent converts among such members may expect to attain full membership rights after completing the initial probationary period: as for the others, their exclusion from full participation in church affairs is usually self-imposed, since most are persons who attend services irregularly and show no desire to move from the periphery to the center of church life.

Among these Sympathizers, who numbered 167 in 1967, are people who come to the church for healing and prayers as the need arises, in much the same way that one might visit a tried and trusted family doctor. Here too are found those who occasionally accompany relatives or friends who are full members. And it is within the loose ranks of the Sympathizers that one finds those Spiritists who are affiliated with more than one church in Winneba or elsewhere. Their numbers are small, perhaps no more than one-third of all Sympathizers, and, contrary to popular belief, very few (approximately 10%) are members of non-Spiritist churches. Most appear to be people like Kojo M, a fairly prosperous farmer from near Winneba Junction, who is not a communicant in any local church, but is a Sympathizer in both the African Faith Tabernacle and the Divine Healer's Church. Kojo M has received

healing treatment at these churches in the past but says that he continues to attend their services "now and then, when I feel that I need to be cheered up and want to hear some good, lively music." Other Sympathizers are persons who appear to be simply trying to keep open a range of healing options, while a few are persons who are in the process of transferring their allegiance from one Spiritist church to another.

Apart from the Sympathizers, children make up another peripheral group in the Spiritist churches. No reliable record of their numbers is kept and church leaders tend to deal in round numbers when estimating how many there are in their assemblies. They are certainly more numerous at church services than are adult Sympathizers, and head-counts on these occasions suggest that there may be about three hundred children attached to the Spiritist churches. All local Spiritist churches practice infant baptism, often as a pre-healing rite.

Church Officers

a) *Roles*: In developing their particular forms of organization the Spiritist churches have tended to rely heavily upon the models provided by the major missions and their direct descendants. In the local Spiritist assemblies we find that many of the church offices common in the orthodox denominations have been adopted in some fashion. In six (M.D.C.C., Divine Healer's Church, Waternakaba, African Faith Tabernacle, Christian Church, and Dugan's Church) the influence of nonconformist Protestant denominations is in evidence, viz.:

i) The M.D.C.C. has adopted the Methodist system, with a number of "Leaders" who are responsible for overseeing a particular section or "Class" of the membership.

ii) In the Divine Healer's Church, Waternakaba, and African Faith Tabernacle members are not organized on the Class System and here there are "Elders" instead of Leaders, such officers playing roles similar to their counterparts in the Presbyterian church.

iii) The Christian Church and Dugan's Church have Elders *and* Leaders and the former church has also adopted the Methodist office of "Lay Preacher." In these two churches, however, the functions of Elders and Leaders are differentiated in a manner similar to the distinction made between "Elders" and "Deacons" in the Pentecostal sects.

In five other churches (St. Anthony Healing Power Church, Twelve Apostles, Redeemer Church of God, Life and Salvation Church, and Christ Divine Healing Church) the Anglo-Catholic pattern of organization appears to have been the primary source of inspiration. In these bodies there are neither Leaders nor Elders but some form of "Church Committee" or "Church Council" and also a "Church Master" or "Church Warden." In the Redeemer Church of God there are also "Cross-bearers," such positions being held by persons who are thought to possess spiritual gifts.

Two churches (Cherubim and Seraphim and Church of the Lord) have been so eclectic in fashioning their organizations that they do not fit comfortably into the previous categories. Cherubim and Seraphim has Cross-bearers, two Leaders whose duties resemble those of Deacons in Pentecostal sects, two "Deputy Leaders" who assist the Leaders, a "Matron" who helps settle disputes between members, a "Captain" who visits sick or lapsed members and fasts on behalf of those who are too ill to do so themselves, and a number of "Followers" who form an advisory council to the pastor. The Church of the Lord also has Cross-bearers, while its Elders combine both spiritual and temporal duties in the performance of their roles; there is a "General Warden" who assists the pastor during services, and two Captains who function in the same manner as those in Cherubim and Seraphim.

As for the remaining two bodies, one (Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple) has not created lay offices and the other (Divine Healing Church) has two "Junior Pastors" and two "Priestesses."

Compared with other types of churches in Winneba, the Spiritist groups display a marked tendency to create a relatively large number of church offices and this may be a factor of some importance in attracting or retaining members. For we have seen that the majority of Spiritists are from quite ordinary walks of life and are unlikely to attain secular positions of authority outside the family.

b) *Social Composition*: The holding of lay office represents a superior form of membership in all local churches, including the Spiritist groups. It is important, therefore, to compare persons in such positions with ordinary full members, for in this way we may be able to see some of the informal selective requirements involved in attaining positions of influence and responsibility within these groups.

There are slightly more women than men among Winneba's church officers, yet it is clear that men enjoy greater opportunities of attaining lay office in all types of local churches, and especially in the American and Pentecostal sects. While the Spiritist churches also show a disproportionately large number of men among their officers, it is in these bodies that women seem to have the best chance of occupying church offices. Roughly one-in-seven women who are full members in Spiritist churches hold an office of some kind, as against one-in-twenty-seven for women in denominations, and one-in-eighteen for women in Pentecostal sects.

Some 75% of Spiritist church officers have been members of their churches for less than ten years and this is not altogether surprising, in view of the relatively short local histories of most of the churches. Longer-serving members are over-represented in the officer group, as are members-from-birth. Age is a traditional source of authority and respect in Effutu society and we see that it is a factor of some importance in the Spiritist churches. But while opportunities of holding office are proportionately greater for older men and

women, it is nevertheless the case that a large number of church officers are persons under forty-five years of age. Age appears to be less significant as a criterion of suitability for office among women than among men in these churches. The reasons for this are unclear, but it may be related to traditional differences between the sexes in the emphasis each placed on age seniority: older women and senior wives generally carried more authority and wielded more influence than young women and junior wives, but women had no age-grade system corresponding to that of the men.

Men engaged in non-traditional occupations are clearly over-represented among the male officers, while farmers and fishermen are just as clearly under-represented. Among the women officers we see that clerical workers and women engaged in farming and fishing are over-represented, while women in sales (mainly petty-trading) occupations are under-represented, although they comprise the majority of women officers. It would seem that for both male and female officers literacy is viewed as an asset, but that the relative scarcity of literate women in the Spiritist churches leaves more offices open to others than is the case among male officers, where literates are not quite so rare. The under-representation of sales workers among both male and female officers is probably a function of the geographical mobility normally involved in this type of work; many persons in this category travel widely in the course of their retailing activities and may be out of town for several weeks at a time, so that regular attention to the duties involved in office-holding may be rendered difficult.

Although Spiritist church officers are predominantly Effutu, members of this tribe are not significantly over-represented among the officer group. The proportion of Fanti among church officers is not far short of that tribe's representation among the Spiritist membership as a whole. The fact that Fanti is the major language used in Spiritist church services is obviously an important factor accounting for this tribe's equitable share of church offices: conversely, it may largely explain the more noticeable under-representation in the officer group of persons other than Effutu and Fanti.

Societies and Other Organized Activities

While opportunities of holding church office are somewhat limited in the orthodox denominations, this is partly offset by the existence of a fairly large number and wide variety of clubs and societies within most denominational congregations. Many of these societies cater especially to the needs of young people (e.g., the Youth Society and the Varic Christian Endeavour Society of the A.M.E.Zion church, the Presbyterian Young People's Fellowship, the Catholic Youth Organization, the Anglican Young People's Association, and the Methodist Guild). Others are women's groups (e.g., the Women's Home and Foreign Missions Society of the A.M.E.Zion church, the Presbyterian Women's Guild, the Anglican Women's Guild, and the Methodist Christ's

Little Band). The Roman Catholic church also has a mutual aid society known as *Mboa Kow* ("Helper's Group") and all the local denominations have their Choral Unions and Singing Bands.

Of the Spiritist churches, however, only six have societies which cater to special interest groups within their memberships. In the Life and Salvation Church, the Christian Church, and the Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple there are both Men's and Women's Guilds; the M.D.C.C. has a women's society known as Natholomea's Band, in honor of the wife of the church founder, while St. Anthony Healing Power Church has a Guild which is open to both men and women. The most elaborate system of societies is found in the Church of the Lord: here there is the Army of Jesus, whose members are all men and who assist in general pastoral work; the Douglas Band, another all-male society which sees to the maintenance of the church premises and property; the Ladies' Praying Union, whose main function is to visit and pray for the sick; and the Morning Star, a society for young children.

As with most aspects of Spiritist church organization, there is a world of difference between the formal existence of assembly societies and their actual operation. Most societies have a formal schedule of fixed, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetings, but this is not adhered to. Impromptu meetings, called without notice as the occasion demands, take place after services are over.[8] No official records or minutes of society meetings are kept, but it would appear that they meet very infrequently. In the Minor Spiritist churches and most local branches of the Major Spiritist churches the life of the assembly revolves around the regular services and healing sessions, rather than society meetings and activities. Periodically, church life is spiced by some special occasion, such as a Harvest Festival, Good Friday celebration, or a Memorial Service, when a larger than usual number of visitors or Sympathizers may be in attendance, and when invitations may be extended to neighboring Spiritist churches in the community. Members of branches of the larger Spiritist churches in Winneba are sometimes invited by headquarters to attend the inauguration of a new assembly; this can involve journeys as far afield as Kumasi and Sekondi, in which case the travellers are billeted overnight in the host church, or in the homes of fellow church members. Apart from such events there are also the annual healing rallies staged at church headquarters, and the annual commemorations of the church's founding; these sorts of occasions provide an opportunity for members in Winneba and elsewhere to identify with and share in the overall achievements and progress of their churches.

Notes for Chapter Five

[1]This information was checked against observations of turnouts at church services and against the impressions of people living near the church in question.

[2]The sex ratio for Winneba's population aged 15 years and over in 1970 was 100 males:115.7 females.

[3]I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971, pp. 66–69.

[4]Turner, ibid., vol. 2, p. 18.

[5]Turner, ibid., vol. 2, pp. 18–19.

[6]Peel, ibid., p. 196.

[7]There are no cars found outside the Spiritist churches on service or healing days. The more expensive European cars, e.g., Mercedes-Benz and Peugot, are to be seen on the street outside the Ebenezer Chapel each Sunday morning.

[8]The inactive nature of most Spiritist societies in Winneba contrasts sharply with the flourishing club life of the Nigerian Aladuras as described by Peel, ibid., pp. 179–84.

VI

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: 1968–77

Trends and Developments

By the close of 1967 Winneba's Spiritist community consisted of fifteen churches with some eighteen assemblies, the total full membership of which stood at 973. Almost ten years later, in July of 1977, the number of Spiritist churches had increased to nineteen, the number of assemblies to twenty-eight, and the total full membership to 1,262. While these changes seem to point to a fairly healthy rate of growth, they also represent a marked reduction in the rate of growth registered during the 1957–67 period. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that more difficult times may lie ahead for many Spiritist churches, especially when we see that other types of local churches, particularly the orthodox denominations, have apparently found a new lease on life and have expanded their membership at a much faster rate.[1]

a) *New Spiritist Assemblies*: Since 1967 eleven new Spiritist assemblies have been formed in Winneba, some as a result of secessions from existing assemblies, but most reflecting the geographical expansion of Major Spiritist churches.

Chart B. Origins of Spiritist Assemblies Introduced to Winneba Between 1968–77

	Church	*Date of Introduction*		*Introducing Agents in Winneba*	*Comments*
		Ghana	*Winneba*		
1.	Believers' Temple of Christ	1968	1968	Pastor Hagan, formerly of local Christian Church.	Initial membership mainly supporters from Christian Church.
2.	Twelve Apostles	1914	v) 1971	Kow Takyi, an Effutu fisherman and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Twelve Apostles members and some Effutu pagans.

	Church	*Date of Introduction*		*Introducing Agents in Winneba*	*Comments*
		Ghana	*Winneba*		
			vi) 1972	Esi Mansah, an Effutu petty-trader and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Twelve Apostles members and some Effutu pagans.
			vii) 1974	John Kwofie, an Effutu farmer and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Twelve Apostles members and some Effutu pagans.
			viii) 1974	Kwame Korsah, an Effutu fisherman and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Twelve Apostles members and some Effutu pagans.
			ix) 1974	Ekua Atta, an Effutu fishmonger and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Twelve Apostles members and some Effutu pagans.
			x) 1976	Ekua Anyensema, an Effutu fishmonger and former pagan.	Initial membership mainly Twelve Apostles members and some Effutu pagans.
3.	Church of the Lord Mission	1972	1972	Bishop Sackey, a former Bishop in Church of the Lord Ghana.	Local secession from Church of the Lord Ghana, reflecting national pattern of secession led by Bishop Sackey.
4.	Nazarene Healing Church	1938	1972	Pastor Okyere Quansah, a member of the Gomoa tribe and former Methodist.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans.
5.	Graceful Healing Church	1966	1973	Martha Oku, a native of Winneba and former member of the Apostolic Church and the Church of the Lord Aladura.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans, with some former members of Redeemer Church of God.
6.	Ebenezer Baptist Church	1976	1976	P. K. Oduro, a former member of Immanuel Church; and Ama Adae, a former member of M.D.C.C.	Initial membership mainly Effutu pagans, with some former members of Dugan's Church and Redeemer Church of God.

i) The Believers' Temple of Christ was formed in the summer of 1968 following a secession from the local branch of the Christian Church. Pastor A. K. Hagan, the leader of this church in Winneba, had been criticized on a number of occasions by the National Secretary and certain leading ministers for his "arrogant" and "disrespectful" behavior toward them. Disciplinary action stopped short at warnings, partly because Hagan was the nephew of the church founder and head, and also because of his popularity with members of his congregation. Early in 1968 Hagan ran into difficulties when Madam O, a highly respected member of his congregation, accused him of fornication with her daughter and named him as the father of her daughter's two young children. Hagan denied these charges and, while they were never proved, the loss of popularity he suffered among a large section of the local membership seriously weakened his position in relation to the church authorities. He was dismissed from the ministry on the grounds that his behavior was "questionable," although Hagan is convinced that the authorities used Madam O's charges as a pretext. These men, he believes, were anxious to prevent him from one day inheriting his uncle's position as head of the church.

ii) Some three years after Pastor Hagan's departure from the Christian Church there appeared the first of six new Twelve Apostles assemblies, all of which were formed by persons who were recent converts to this church. This form of proliferation, which we noted in our earlier discussion of Twelve Apostles, is a reflection of the very loose relationship which exists between headquarters and local branches in this body. Prophet Sasa, the church head, trained all the new pastors of these assemblies, but did not assign them to posts in Winneba.[2] One of the older leaders of a local Twelve Apostles assembly felt that this lack of direction reflected unfavorably on the church as a whole:

> No wonder many people say that we are just *Nyamanyama* churches. We have ten branches in this town. Now who ever heard of a church with ten branches in a town this size? Who ever heard of the Methodists with ten branches? No wonder people laugh and shake their heads. It makes no sense at all!

iii) In 1972 the Winneba assembly of the Church of the Lord Ghana, a product of Bishop Yamoah's secession from the Nigerian church, was itself the victim of secession. The roots of this latest conflict go back as far as 1970, when Bishop Sackey of Takoradi was accused by church elders of fornication and was subsequently expelled from the church. He then rallied support from some southern assemblies, including that at Winneba, where he managed to win over the majority of the members to his cause. The local assembly then split into two factions, with one group remaining loyal to the "Primate" (Yamoah) and the other joining Sackey in his new Church of the Lord Mission.

iv) Another church to appear in 1972 was the Nazarene Healing Church, a group which was originally formed in Cape Coast in 1938. The Winneba

branch was introduced by Pastor Okyere Quansah, a member of the Gomoa tribe from the village of Gomoa Potsin (about ten miles east of Winneba). Pastor Quansah, a former Methodist who worked as a Sanitary Inspector, chose to establish the church in Winneba because it was the largest center of population close to his home village.

v) It was in 1973 that Prophetess Martha Oku formed a branch of her Graceful Healing Church in Winneba. An Effutu, Martha Oku was born in Winneba in 1920 to parents who were Methodists and she too became a member of this church. After her marriage, a difficult child-birth caused her to seek help in the Apostolic Church, in which group she became a member. During her travels as a trader in Nigeria she came into contact with the Church of the Lord Aladura and, when she returned in 1953 to settle in Takoradi, she became a charter member of the Church of the Lord in that town. In 1955, she parted company with this church and returned to the Apostolic Church, in which she remained until she formed her own group in 1966. From her Takoradi headquarters she moved to her home town and, in an inaugural rally, succeeded in attracting one hundred and forty charter members. Initial enthusiasm waned, however, and by mid-1977 the membership stood at forty-five, together with some twenty Sympathizers.

vi) The Ebenezer Baptist Church was founded in Winneba in 1976 by P. K. Oduro, with the help of Madam Ama Adae, both of whom are natives of the town. The former was a member of the American-based Immanuel Baptist Church and the latter had belonged to the local M.D.C.C. assembly. Oduro left his former church after growing personal dissatisfaction over its lack of interest in healing and spiritual protection; Madam Adae claims to have received the "Holy Spirit" during a 1975 visit to the M.D.C.C. "Peaceful Year Celebration," at which time she was "divinely instructed" to go out and form her own church.[3] Like the Believers' Temple of Christ, the Ebenezer Baptist Church is a localized, Minor Spiritist church with no branches outside the town.

b) *Struggling Assemblies*: In view of what we know about the apparently unstable and fluctuating nature of Spiritist church membership, it is somewhat surprising to find that only one of the assemblies functioning in 1967 was no longer present in 1977. Faced with a dwindling membership and support, Prophet Mensah of the Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple left town in the summer of 1968 and moved his base of operations to Gomoa Potsin, changing the name of his church to Paradise Revival Healing Church. Prophet Mensah's strategy may be indicative of what occurs in other parts of the country, where what appears as a pattern of short-lived assemblies may in fact reflect the activities of semi-itinerant prophets who spend a few years in one location, before moving on to another, occasionally changing the names of their groups in the process. Prophet Mensah's group at Gomoa Potsin functioned until 1974, when he moved to Accra. We understand that he

currently heads yet another small independent Spiritist church in that city.

While the departure of Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple represents the only case of Spiritist assembly collapse during the 1967–77 period, several local groups did experience declining memberships. The proliferation of Twelve Apostles was achieved partly at the expense of the older branches of this church in town, two of which suffered heavy losses of members to the newly created assemblies between 1971 and 1976. There are now clear indications that Winneba's assemblies of Twelve Apostles feed off each other in recruiting new members and are no longer able to draw so heavily from the pagan population of the town.

Some Spiritist assemblies have experienced problems as a result of schisms and secessions, although these have not proved to be fatal to the original assemblies. The Christian Church (renamed "Christian Divine Church" in late 1968) survived the departure of Pastor Hagan, together with twenty-five supporters, and has managed to build up its full membership from a post-secession total of thirty-nine to a 1977 figure of sixty-seven, most of these additional members coming from the A.M.E.Zion church. Also making a satisfactory recovery from secession and recruiting mainly from among disaffected A.M.E.Zionists was the Church of the Lord, which increased its full membership from a post-secession twenty-eight to a 1977 total of forty-four.

Less successful in withstanding the shock of secession was the African Faith Tabernacle assembly, which lost its pastor and eighteen full members to the United Pentecostal Church in 1973.[4] This left the assembly with some seventy-three full members and since then it has steadily lost ground; its full membership had declined to fifty-five by mid-1977. The most recent secession from a local Spiritist assembly occurred in October of 1976 when Pastor Blankson, a young man enlisted by the ailing and enfeebled Prophet Oben of the Christ Divine Healing Church, left with some twelve members to join the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The full membership of the church has eroded rapidly, most of the departed members joining other Spiritist assemblies, while others have left the area.

Two Minor Spiritist churches have suffered a marked decline in their memberships since 1967 without the trauma of secession or the loss of a leader. The most dramatic reduction was that which took place in Prophetess Quansah's Waternakaba, where the numbers have declined to only eight (all women). Surviving members of this church attribute their declining fortunes to the trading activities of their leader, which have increasingly involved her in travelling for extended periods outside Winneba. Prophet Dugan's church has also fallen upon bad times, but for apparently different reasons. At first the Prophet strenuously denied any suggestion that the membership of hs church had been dwindling, but finally conceded that this was the case and suggested that the losses (from forty-nine full members in 1967 to twenty-eight in 1977) were due to the fact that many members had gone to live or work

elsewhere.[5] Further enquiries in town revealed that only three former members had moved out of Winneba and that most of the rest had joined other Spiritist churches. From these persons we heard charges of "harshness" and "arrogance" levelled against the Prophet and these were said to be the cause of recent defections.

c) *Flourishing Assemblies*: Despite the slowing-down in the rate of growth of the Spiritist churches, some assemblies have managed to forge ahead in this respect. The M.D.C.C., which is the oldest and best organized Spiritist assembly in town, has had the greatest success in recruiting from among the children of its members; this church has also been most attractive to former members of the A.M.E.Zion prayer and healing group, many of whom joined the M.D.C.C. in 1970. The Divine Healer's Church, which appeared in town during the post-1957 expansion phase, also gained new members from A.M.E.Zion, although its appeal seems to be strongest for those who prefer healing-oriented Spiritism in a revivalist setting, a combination which this group has developed quite markedly since 1968, and which also appears to have become more pronounced in other expanding assemblies, such as the Christian Divine Church and Life and Salvation Church.

Of the various local Spiritist "success stories," the rejuvenation of the once feeble Divine Healing Church (renamed "Saviour Church" in 1971) is perhaps the easiest to explain. There can be little doubt that this group's dramatic change in fortunes in 1975, when its full membership was down to only nine persons, was due to the tremendous local impact made by the conversion of Kow Bentum. This man was the senior priest of *Dentsifo* company until 1967 and during his long career had earned the reputation of being the greatest priest in the town and, according to many, the greatest priest the Effutu had ever known. His fame and prestige rested not only upon his position in the *Asafo* priesthood, but was also closely related to his exploits during conflicts between the townspeople and the *Omanhene* (supported by the colonial authorities) in the early 1940's. At this time an accumulation of grievances piled up against the *Omanhene*, Ayirebi Acquah III, and matters came to a violent conclusion in 1941 when a police detachment fired into a large crowd of rioters, killing six of them. Kow Bentum was jailed for his part in the affair, being identified as one of the "ringleaders" who had led the rioters and urged them to attack the police with stones.

Upon his release from prison Kow Bentum was again active in a popular movement against the *Omanhene*, this time helping to organize his *Asafo* company in blocking the route taken by the *Omanhene* on his way to celebrate Empire Day at Cape Coast. This brought about another term in prison for the redoubtable priest, who today feels that this only served to enhance his popularity among the townspeople. Many older residents

confirm his claim that, as he was being marched with fellow-prisoners to perform daily manual labor, the women used to run before him, laying out their cloths upon the street for him to walk over. In short, Kow Bentum had attained the stature of a "mighty man," a living legend whose exploits were recounted with great relish, and it is against this background that the local impact of his conversion (or "reconversion," as he likes to put it) is best understood.

Kow Bentum's path to Spiritism is worth considering in some detail, both for the light it sheds on the problem such a person faces in extricating himself from a strategic position within the traditional religious system and for what it reveals about the actual process of conversion to a particular Spiritist church. No doubt the difficulties experienced by such a man are unlikely to be felt as keenly, or expressed as dramatically, by others less authoritatively involved in the traditional religious system. Yet it may be suggested that the conversion of Kow Bentum to Saviour Church Spiritism sharply underlines the nature of a process which is, in its general features, common to most who make the transition from Effutu traditional religion to Effutu Spiritism. We let the former *Dentsifo* priest and now National Chairman of the Saviour Church tell the story in his own words:

> In a way, I suppose that I was not really "converted," since I had been baptized in the Methodist church when I was a child and I joined the Faith Tabernacle when my father became a pastor in that church. But, of course, I had to leave all that behind when I became *Dentsifo* priest. Still, during my troubles with the authorities when I was imprisoned, I prayed to God to help me.

At this point I asked him if he was referring to the Christian god or to the *Asafo* god which he served.

> Yes, the Christian god. You see, the *Asafo* god was not in me and so I could not ask it to help. It can only help when it comes inside you. At first the god takes hold of you, but this is only its call. Then, after training, you are able to control it to some extent. While I was praying for help in the prison I was also praying to God to free me from the *Asafo* god. This thing (the *Asafo* god) had brought me a lot of trouble. I wanted to be rid of it.
>
> It was in November of 1966 that the beginnings of my reconversion to Christianity took place. I went with my brother-in-law to Tema (a port some twenty miles east of Accra). My brother-in-law is part owner of the Avenida Hotel in Accra and he is a Methodist. At Tema we bought two fishing boats. He named his *Konsuadzebae* (the name of his brother-in-law's family god) and I named mine *Twer Nyame* ("Praise God"). Both boats were launched on the same day, but while *Konsuadzebae* returned after the first day's fishing with a good catch of herring, my boat got lost and did not return until five days later. Meanwhile, *Konsuadzebae* continued to fish very successfully.
>
> My crew was very upset with this turn of events. The boat was badly damaged and full of holes which had to be repaired. They all knew that I was a priest and felt that my god had been angered by my naming the boat *Twer Nyame*. I told them they could say what they liked, but the boat would keep the name I had given it. After about three weeks the *Twer Nyame* was repaired, but by this time there was only one

week remaining in the month before we made up our accounts, and the other boat had been fishing continuously while mine was being repaired. But by the grace of God, we succeeded in making very fine catches during this last week. As a result, when our accounts were drawn up, it was found that the *Konsuadzebae* had caught fish to the value of 32,000 Cedis, while the *Twer Nyame* had caught just over 32,000 Cedis worth of fish, and this in only one week! After this my crew was satisfied. Then they understood the meaning of the name I had given my boat. At that time I decided to put my name down as a member of the Saviour Church (then known as Divine Healing Church).

I interrupted at this juncture to ask why he had chosen this particular church and not some other.

Well, it was because of this. I wanted to be rid of the "fetish" (the *Asafo* god) and a friend of mine—a Mr. Otu, who was a diver—was a member of Saviour Church and he told me how wonderful the Prophetess (Prophetess Essabah, the church founder) was. He said that she had performed many miracles and would be able to remove the "thing." So he contacted the Prophetess and she came to Tema to see me. This was in 1967. I put the problem before her and she agreed to help, but only on condition that I "stayed quiet" in Tema and did not return to Winneba.

At this time the *Tuafo* company in Winneba had just "brought down" a new priest who was a woman who had just completed her course of training. My own company sent for me, since it was close to *Aboakyer* time and they needed my services to prepare for this event. I told them I wouldn't come, although I did not say that I had decided to become a Christian. I just told them that I didn't feel right, that I didn't think I had the "fetish" any longer.

They went back home, but shortly afterwards they sent a captain and two linguists from the company to bring me back home. I refused, but then they taunted me by saying that I was afraid of the new *Tuafo* priestess. I became very angry and pointed out that even the senior priest of *Tuafo* could not face me, so how then could a woman! I know that it was wrong of me, but I was so angry and my pride was hurt so much that I went back to Winneba to help with the *Aboakyer*. As a result, my company caught two deer before *Tuafo* caught any.

After the hunt, on Sunday and Monday, the priests of Winneba have a "fetish dance." During this dance the god possesses me and I am able to eat cutlasses and walk on fire. I don't feel any pain at all when this happens. In fact, I am not aware of what happens until after the event when people tell me what transpired. When the god takes me, people cover me with a cloth and when everything is normal I can see the bloodstains on the calico which shows that I have been eating the cutlass. As I say, I have never felt any pains doing this dance before. But this time I had terrible intestinal pains. I couldn't eat and I couldn't sleep. I was spitting blood. At 1 a.m. on Monday I left Winneba for Tema. I was still suffering very badly and so the Prophetess was sent for. She came and severely admonished me. She reminded me that my god was very strong and made me promise to stay in Tema for eight years. I was to be free of the god if I kept this promise.

Here I asked him if the Prophetess did anything besides exact the promise that he would remain in Tema.

Yes. First there were prayers for three days. At this point the bleeding stopped. Then there was fasting for three days. This was a "dry fast" during which I was not permitted to eat, although I could drink. Then there was a "six-to-six" fast (from 6

a.m. to 6 p.m.) which lasted a further two weeks. Then I was to attend church (the Tema branch of the Saviour Church) every Sunday, which I did.

After some six years in Tema I received news that my mother here in Winneba was very ill. I wanted to go and see her, but I didn't know what to do. So I went straight to Sekondi to consult the Prophetess. I pleaded with her to allow me to visit my mother. I explained to her that if I did not go, people would not understand me. But the Prophetess was adamant and said that I must stay in Tema for the full eight years. When I pleaded with her, she told me to trust God, that he would look after everything. Reluctantly, I returned to Tema without stopping at Winneba. Well, by the grace of God, my mother recovered and this showed that the Prophetess was right.

After eight years were completed, the Prophetess made special prayers and told me to go back to Winneba. She then sent a circular letter to all branches of the Saviour Church in Ghana, telling them to come to Winneba. This was done and we had a great celebration of the church in Winneba, with members arriving from all parts of the country to greet me upon my homecoming. However, before this happened, the Prophetess told me that, upon my arrival in Winneba, I was to go immediately to *Dentsifo* headquarters and "greet the gods." I was worried about what would happen, but I did as she asked and faced the company gods.

Nothing happened. After this we had special services of thanksgiving.

I was now an active member of the Saviour Church in my hometown and became National Chairman in 1976.

Kow Bentum's return to Winneba as a Christian convert and member of the Saviour Church was the principal topic of conversation in the town throughout much of 1975, so that even the *Omanhene* and his struggles with those who would depose him was pushed into second place in the minds of most townspeople. And the great celebrations staged by the Prophetess to signify her church's victory over paganism helped to focus local attention upon a hitherto insignificant Spiritist assembly. By mid-1977 Saviour Church full membership had risen to forty-one and while it is still one of the smaller Spiritist assemblies in Winneba its future seems assured for some time to come. The man whose conversion to the church did so much to help bring about this improvement now works (1977) as a security guard at Christiansborg castle, in Accra, but he returns home each weekend to his hometown, where his fame is as high as ever. Townspeople speak knowingly of his "real" job at the castle which, it is said, is not that of a mere security guard, but is nothing less than "Spiritual Adviser" to Col. Akyeampon, the current head of state.[6]

d) *Inter-Church Relations*: In 1972 a Local Council of Churches was formed in Winneba with a view to opening up regular avenues of communication between those local churches which were members of the Ghana Christian Council and others which were not. The initiative was taken by the pastor of the Methodist church and invitations were extended to the leaders of all Major Spiritist assemblies in the town. Only the Church of the Lord, Church of the Lord Mission, Cherubim and Seraphim, and the Divine

Healer's Church showed any interest in the scheme in 1972; today the only Spiritist churches represented on the Council are the Church of the Lord and the Divine Healer's Church. The present (1977) pastor of M.D.C.C., who was not stationed in Winneba in 1972, said that he was unaware of the Council's existence and that he saw no point in joining it. It is this man's intention to promote a local organization representing all Spiritist churches in Winneba and when we spoke to him in 1977 he was compiling a register of such bodies and was most anxious to receive the names of the smaller Spiritist groups with which he was unfamiliar.

Spiritists and Spiritism in 1977

a) *Spiritist Faith*: Since 1968 there have been no dramatic shifts in local Spiritist faith and practice, which are still aimed squarely at problems related to spiritual healing and protection. Services in most churches are conducted along familiar lines, although those of the Christian Divine Church, Life and Salvation Church, and Divine Healer's Church appear to have taken on a more revivalist character, with much greater emphasis than before on the hearing of personal testimonies and the singing of revival-oriented hymns. Services in the Divine Healer's Church are now enlivened by a brass band, whose renditions are relayed via loudspeakers to spectators and passers-by on the street, so that a distinct "rally" effect is created.

The secessions from the Church of the Lord and the Christian Church have not produced changes in doctrines, patterns of worship or forms of organization. None of the Minor Spiritist churches has expanded outside the community and there are no signs that they have evolved a more complex theology since 1968. The emphasis upon oral, rather than written, communication of religious concerns seems to be as great as ever in the town's Spiritist churches, with no indication as yet that official church literature is playing a more important role in the life of the local assemblies. The M.D.C.C. began publication (in English) of its monthly magazine, "The Mycan," but we found very few regular subscribers among the Winneba assembly in 1977.

The war against "the Army of the Devil" is still being waged with unabated vigor and with essentially the same armory of weapons employed in 1968. The only novel devices we encountered in 1977 were those of the Nazarene Healing Church, and these have not yet been adopted by other local Spiritist bodies. This church makes use of *sunsum anhwe* ("spiritual sand"), sometimes referred to simply as *akodze* ("weapon"); this is obtained from the Kwahu hills in the eastern part of the country and may be sprinkled over the patient, or mixed with "holy water" to form a paste, which is then applied to the afflicted part of the body. Also popular as a healing and protective substance in this church is *sunsum semina* ("spiritual soap"); this consists of

ordinary, locally produced soap, with certain herbs added by the church founder, who blesses it before distribution to local branches.

All local Spiritist churches which functioned in 1968 claimed an increase in the number of patients they had treated in 1976, although there has been no improvement in recording techniques. The Life and Salvation Church and M.D.C.C. are still the only two bodies which keep records of "cases" dealt with, and the latter church is still the only one to classify its patients by specific ailments.

b) *Pastors and Prophets*: Of the fourteen Spiritist church leaders whose social backgrounds we examined early in 1968, seven were still heading assemblies in Winneba in 1977, although one (Pastor Hagan) had left his former church to found his own group. Most of the remaining seven leaders had been transferred to branches elsewhere in Ghana, the sole exception being the former pastor of Divine Healer's Church, who had resigned from the Spiritist ministry to assume the position of "Queen Mother" at Gomoa Potsin.[7]

A comparison of the social characteristics of the twenty-eight Spiritist leaders active in the summer of 1977 with those of the 1968 leadership group suggests the following observations:

i) Although there are now more female leaders than in 1968, the sex ratio has not altered significantly; male leaders still outnumber female leaders by about three to one.

ii) The vast majority of Spiritist leaders are under forty-five years of age, as was the case in 1968, but the proportion of leaders in the youngest (23–34 years) age group has dropped markedly. The average age of Spiritist leaders has increased from forty to forty-three years.

iii) There has been a numerical and proportionate increase in Effutu leaders since 1968, with the result that over 60% of the current group of Spiritist leaders are members of this tribe.

iv) In general, the Spiritist leaders of 1977 are less well educated than those of 1968; the search for "intellectuals," so often mentioned as a pressing need in 1968, has not borne fruit at this level.

v) Whereas in 1968 the majority of Spiritist leaders had come to their vocations after a period of employment in craft or manufacturing occupations, this is now true of less than 40% of the current leaders.

vi) The proportion of leaders born of pagan parents is now considerably higher than that recorded in 1968.

vii) The current group of leaders contrasts sharply with the 1968 group in terms of their initial Christian affiliations. Whereas the overwhelming majority of leaders in 1968 were first affiliated with orthodox denominations, today less than half fall into this category; initial conversion from paganism to a Spiritist church has been the experience of over 40% of Winneba's current Spiritist leaders.

It should be noted that many of the differences we have summarized can be accounted for, in large part, by the burgeoning Twelve Apostles' ministry in the town, for the recent proliferation of this church locally has been primarily the work of persons who are uneducated Effutu from traditional occupations (farming, fishing, petty-trading, etc.) and who are former pagans. Were we to discount this group, our comparisons would show that current Spiritist leaders differ only slightly, in terms of social backgrounds, from those of 1968.

c) *Members: Some General Comparisons, 1967–77*: A comparison of the social characteristics of full members in the Spiritist churches in 1967 and 1977 suggests the following observations:

i) As in 1967 the overwhelming majority of Spiritists are women and, while the increase in the proportion of female members since 1967 is not great, it would seem that the local Spiritist churches are still heavily oriented to problems of particular concern to women and that they have not yet succeeded in casting their appeal in terms which are attractive to more than a few men.

ii) Ethnic homogeneity has become an even more pronounced feature of the Spiritist membership. Increasingly, it would seem the local assemblies are becoming *Effutu* religious organizations, in which all but a few members are natives of Winneba.

iii) The overwhelming majority of Spiritists are still people who are converts, typically from paganism, but with a scattering of converts from other Christian churches.

iv) There have been no major changes in the age composition of Spiritist memberships since 1967, although there is some indication that the "bulge" evident in the 25–44 years age group is being flattened slightly.

v) In terms of occupational backgrounds, the Spiritists of 1977 appear little different from those of 1967: the bulk of the male membership still consists of farmers and fishermen, while most of the women are engaged in trading.

In sum, a comparison of the 1967 and 1977 data suggests that the local Spiritist churches have not moved far in the direction of balanced, cross-sectional memberships and that most of the social characteristics of Spiritists evident in 1967 still exist—sometimes in a more accentuated form—among those who belong to these churches at the present time.

d) *Members: Three Congregations*: Information of the type we have just discussed is useful for what it tells us about the social characteristics of local Spiritists in general, but it is necessary to take note of some of the internal variations which occur within this group. With this in mind, we now examine a sample of the membership in two Spiritist churches, one (M.D.C.C.) being an old-established and flourishing assembly and the other (Salvation Church)

being a younger, localized Minor Spiritist church which has been declining in popularity over the past few years. In order to broaden the comparative framework, we also look at a sample of the full members of the A.M.E.Zion church, the most "African" of the orthodox denominations and one which, until quite recently, had been generally sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of the Spiritist-oriented Christians.[8] The main points which emerge from a comparison of some 98 full members in these three congregations are as follows:

i) Sex and Age: A.M.E.Zion has the smallest proportion of female members, although the present sex ratio in this church partly reflects the loss of many female members during 1969–70, following the closure of the church's healing and prayer group. The proportion of women in Salvation Church is lower than the average for local Spiritist churches, but this is because there were five female members missing from our sample because they were out of town in 1977. A.M.E.Zion has the best-balanced congregation in terms of age distribution: as the oldest of the three congregations it has the largest proportion of older members; and as the only one of the three congregations to run its own schools, it enjoys some advantage in being able to recruit young adults into its fold. Both Spiritist churches display the familiar bulge in the 25–44 age group, although the Salvation Church has an unusually large proportion of members under twenty-five years of age, a fact which may be accounted for largely by the presence of four of the Prophet's children in our sample.

ii) Tribe and Birthplace: Although its founding members were mostly Fanti, the A.M.E.Zion congregation is now a thoroughly Effutu body, the vast majority of whose members were born in the locality. The Salvation Church consists entirely of people who are Effutu; with the exception of three of the Prophet's children, who were born in Koforidua during their father's stay in that town, all members of this church are natives of Winneba. The most ethnically heterogeneous of the congregations is M.D.C.C. and this may reflect the public reputation and appeal which this church has throughout a wide area of southern Ghana, particularly among the Fanti.

iii) Education and Occupations: As expected, A.M.E.Zion members have attained higher levels of education than either of the two Spiritist congregations; this is true of both male and female members, although the differences in educational levels between A.M.E.Zion and the two Spiritist bodies are sharpest among males. These differences in educational background are generally paralleled by similar differences in members' occupations.

iv) Church Attendance and Membership in Secular Voluntary Associations: Salvation Church members visit their church more frequently, on average, than do members of the other two congregations; this is less a function of the compelling power of Salvation Church activities than it is of the fact that several members of the Prophet's family—who live on the church

compound and perform daily chores there—are included in our sample. The greater frequency of attendance by M.D.C.C. members as against those of A.M.E.Zion is explained by the Spiritist church's regular, daily schedule of services and assorted gatherings (in contrast to the once-weekly service of the A.M.E.Zion church); this, it appears, more than offsets the A.M.E.Zion's advantage in the area of church clubs and societies.

Our figures on church attendance suggest that Winneba's Spiritists visit their churches less frequently than the Nigerian Aladuras.[9] In view of this, we might expect that they display a greater involvement in secular, voluntary associations than do their Nigerian counterparts, but this is not the case.[10] Urban voluntary associations in western Nigeria, however, differ in important respects from those found in Winneba, not least in terms of the strong ethnic bond which unites members and distinguishes them from other Yoruba subgroups. In Winneba most residents—and most Spiritists—are Effutu and are thus members of a small, compact ethnic group which admits of none of the territorial subdivisions found among the much larger and more widely-dispersed Yoruba. This means that, in Winneba, voluntary associations do not have an ethnic focus centering on the special needs and aims of immigrants or other "strangers," although such residents are more likely than others to avail themselves of the benefits which membership in a voluntary association provides. In this connection, it is understandable that the M.D.C.C. congregation, which has the largest proportion of non-Effutu and persons born outside Winneba, also has the largest proportion of members who belong to voluntary associations.

v) Religion of Husbands and Wives: Included in our sample were twenty-nine married men and thirty married women. All of the men and all but one of the women claimed to be monogamists; since our sample comprised only full members, these claims may be soundly based, although it must be acknowledged that an open admission of polygyny, especially to a western observer, still constitutes a potentially embarrassing situation for some church members. Identity of church membership on the part of spouses is most frequent in M.D.C.C., while married male members with pagan wives are found principally in Salvation Church.

vi) Religion of Parents: Even in old-established congregations like A.M.E.Zion, most members are converts, although the proportion of such persons is smaller here than in either M.D.C.C. or Salvation Church. It follows, therefore, that many members will have parents who were pagans, but it is important to distinguish between a parent's religion at birth and his or her religion subsequently. When we do, we see that fathers of A.M.E.Zion members (56.7% of whom were pagans at birth) show a subsequent conversion rate of over 52.0%; fathers of M.D.C.C. members (50.0% of whom were pagans at birth) had a subsequent conversion rate of about 50%; and the fathers of Salvation Church members (over 91.0% of whom were pagans at birth) had a subsequent conversion rate of less than 20.0%. Much the same

patterns are evident among members' mothers, although here the rates of subsequent conversion are generally higher than for fathers.

vii) Converts: We have already noted that the majority of members in all three congregations are converts and it is worthwhile asking a number of additional questions about this majority group. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to clear up some of the confusion surrounding their status. In the first place, although they are converts, they are not all converts from paganism; many were born of parents who were Christians, but who belonged to churches other than those their children joined; some of these converts were born of parents who were originally pagans, but who joined Christian churches before their children (our converts) were born. The matter is further complicated by the fact that, while over 80.0% of the members in our sample are not "first generation" Christians, a good number of those who describe themselves as "second," "third," or even "fourth" generation Christians had parents who were not, in fact, members of Christian churches. In some cases this is because a family tradition of Christianity has been interrupted during the parents' generation; in others it is because the tradition has been carried on by persons of the father's generation—an uncle or an aunt, perhaps—but not by the respondent's immediate forebears. These factors help to explain why it is that, even in Salvation Church, there are relatively few members who are first generation Christians.

In both A.M.E.Zion and M.D.C.C. the majority of converts (51.8% and 51.6%, respectively) had previously been members of orthodox denominations; former Methodists figure prominently among such converts (eleven out of fourteen in A.M.E.Zion and nine of sixteen in M.D.C.C.). As we had anticipated, Salvation Church had the largest proportion of converts from paganism (52.1%), but we had not expected to find quite so many converts of this kind in A.M.E.Zion; a closer look at these former pagans in A.M.E.Zion revealed that all were over fifty years of age and had been members of the church for upwards of twenty-five years.

Nearly all converts to A.M.E.Zion and Salvation Church joined their present churches in Winneba, which in most cases was their birthplace. Conversion locations for M.D.C.C. show a different pattern, with 45.1% joining this church at a place other than Winneba. In view of the relatively large number of non-Effutu and persons who were born outside Winneba among this church's members, the figure here was not unexpectedly high; but we see that most (eight of fourteen) of those who were converted at a place other than Winneba were, in fact, Effutu who had been born in Winneba but had resided for some time in other parts of the country; the remaining six were non-Effutu, only one of whom had been converted in his hometown.

As expected, most converts to M.D.C.C. (61.2%) and to Salvation Church (78.2%) gave "healing" or "spiritual protection"—for themselves or relatives—as their reasons for joining these churches; in Salvation Church there were a number of converts (five, or 16.1%) who said that they joined

because they had relatives or friends in this church, while a fairly large number of M.D.C.C. converts (nine, or 29%) told us that they were converted "because of the preaching," or "because the preaching was impressive." The reasons offered by A.M.E.Zion converts are more diverse; six (22.2%) said they joined because they attended an A.M.E.Zion school and the same number gave as their reason a desire "to follow God," "to follow Jesus," or "to know God (or Jesus) better"; four others spoke of their hopes for "salvation," or for "eternal life," while two spoke approvingly of the church's "doctrine"; the influence of relatives or friends was cited as a reason by some five converts and another said that she joined because the church was close to her house. Despite the diversity, we see that A.M.E.Zion converts tend, on the whole, to stress different concerns than do their counterparts in the two Spiritist churches; there is no mention of spiritual healing or protection and there is a much greater emphasis upon Christianity as involving a search for grace and sanctification, rather than the hope of immediate, tangible results.

Notes for Chapter Six

[1]Between 1967 and 1977 the full membership of the orthodox denominations increased by 179.5%. While the Methodist following in Winneba has continued to grow, the greatest gains have been registered by the Roman Catholics (whose congregation is now the largest in the community), Anglicans, and Presbyterians. Growth in denominational membership may be attributed in large measure to these churches' renewed involvement in educational activity: between 1962 and 1976 fourteen new schools were opened in the district, all but three being managed by denominations; the Roman Catholics now run four Middle schools (the same number as the Methodists) with a total, full-time enrollment of 558 (as against 386 in Methodist Middle schools). The A.M.E.Zion church suffered a 29.9% drop in membership between 1967 and 1977, much of this following the closure of its healing and prayer group in 1969 by the new pastor. The Pentecostal sects' full membership increased by 94.4% between 1967 and 1977. Pastor Bondzie's Christ Revival Church collapsed in 1970 and was replaced by a branch of F'Eden Church (an indigenous organization which Bondzie himself joined). In 1973 branches of the Apostolic Reformed Church of Ghana and the United Pentecostal Church (U.S. based) were introduced to Winneba. Full membership of the American sects increased by 73.9% between 1967 and 1977: the First Century Gospel has remained static in size and shows no signs of breaking out of its introversionist shell; Jehovah's Witnesses have continued their aggressive campaign of door-to-door proselytization and have maintained their rapid rate of growth; the Seventh-day Adventists' recent increase in membership has been due mainly to an influx of new members in 1976, when some followers of Prophet Oben (Christ Divine Healing Church) broke away from their blind leader to join the local S.D.A. assembly.

[2]One local Twelve Apostles leader begged us to go and explain her concerns to Prophet Sasa and, since we were curious to know what the Prophet's thinking was on this issue, we agreed. Unfortunately, the Prophet was absent from his headquarters on the two occasions we journeyed there in 1977, but we met his secretary, who said that the Prophet would shortly proclaim a ban on

the opening of new "gardens" (branches) in Winneba. We do not know if this has now been done or how it may be enforced.

[3]The Peaceful Year Celebration is held at Mozano each August to commemorate the birth of the founder's son, Prophet Matapoly Moses Jehu-Appiah.

[4]The United Pentecostal Church commenced work in Ghana in 1968 and was, for a short time, an "overseas sponsor" of Anim's Christ Apostolic Church.

[5]In 1969 Dugan changed the name of his church to Salvation Church.

[6]We asked Kow Bentum about this, but he dismissed the suggestion as "mere rumor."

[7]This is an Akan political office and is normally filled by the mother or sister of the previous *Omanhene*.

[8]A.M.E.Zion and M.D.C.C. samples were drawn from lists of names contained in the Leaders' Class Books; in the case of Salvation Church we obtained from the Prophet the names of all full members and, in view of the relatively small size of the membership (twenty-eight), tried to interview as many of these as possible, eventually succeeding in some twenty-three cases. A total of ninety-eight members were interviewed (about 23% of the total full membership); with a few exceptions, these interviews were conducted at church premises, usually following services or meetings.

[9]Peel, ibid., p. 198. His sample consisted of males only, which is somewhat artificial in view of the preponderance of women in the Aladura churches.

[10]The average number of associational memberships per person in the Winneba sample was 0.3 compared with 1.5 for Peel's Nigerian congregations.

VII
CONCLUSION

The Spiritist Response: Nature and Roots

In their concern with spiritual healing and protection the Spiritist churches bear a strong resemblance to the Yoruba "Aladuras" of Nigeria,[1] the Bantu "Zionists" of South Africa,[2] the Shona "Spirit-type" movements of Rhodesia[3] and most of the bodies surveyed by Barrett in his study of African religious independency."[4] One may go further and suggest that the primary religious orientation of Ghanaian Spiritists and similar African groups is not peculiarly African, but is typical of a much larger class of religious movements whose conception of salvation Wilson has termed "thaumaturgical," and which that author has portrayed (in *ideal-typical* terms) in the following way:

> The individual's concern is to be relieved from present ills, whether physical or mental, and salvation is gained by special, almost magical dispensation by supernatural agencies from the normal laws of causality. There is here no conception of the world being saved, but only of immediate release from tensions and difficulties and vague ideas of transformation into conditions of bliss. . . . This response is in fact a demand for miracles, not the expectation that principles are to be discovered for the salvation of the initiated.[5]

In Wilson's work the thaumaturgical orientation is one of seven possible "responses to the world" and, as such, forms part of his basic typology of sectarian religious movements.[6] This typology is of wider applicability than those developed from research on African religious movements (e.g., Sundkler's "Ethiopian" and "Zionist" churches,[7] or Daneel's "Ethiopian type" and "Spirit type" churches[8]), most of which seem too closely bound up with a particular area and a distinctive history to be usefully applied elsewhere. Wilson's approach proceeds from a recognition of what is, perhaps, the most fundamental *religious* question facing members of religious groups, viz., "What shall we do to be saved?" and employs this question to establish a series of logically-derived responses.[9] This focus, one feels, helps minimize some of the dangers of reductionism inherent in a sociological approach to religious groups, for it provides the investigator with a constant reminder that the objects of his attention are indeed *religious* bodies, as well as being possibly acculturative, nativist, instrumental, expressive, etc.[10]

The predominantly thaumaturgical orientation of Spiritist churches in Ghana has led one observer to characterize them as being only "marginally

Christian" in practice.[11] Underlying this generally negative evaluation is a perception of the churches as being narrowly this-worldly, theologically primitive, and tainted by paganism. It cannot be denied that the major preoccupation of the Spiritist churches is with practical, this-worldly concerns, prominent among which are the promises of healing and spiritual protection. Yet, as we noted earlier in our discussion of Spiritist worship, these churches are by no means silent on moral and ethical questions; many of their sermons and scriptural lessons deal explicitly with the traditional Christian virtues. And in their attitudes toward such things as smoking, drinking, and gambling, Spiritist leaders are generally much more uncompromising than their counterparts in the orthodox denominations.

It is also true that, in comparison with the complex doctrines espoused by the orthodox denominations, those of the Spiritists often appear rudimentary and unsophisticated. But in view of their overriding aim, which is to direct the Christian faith toward the amelioration of immediately pressing problems, there may be little need for doctrinal sophistication. And since they are inspired in no small way by New Testament descriptions of the early church, Spiritist leaders usually see no urgent need to spend time and effort in refining or clarifying principles whose outlines were clear to the early disciples. Being "spiritual" bodies, the possession of spiritual gifts by leaders is valued more highly than systematic clerical training, yet most of the churches do try to ensure that their pastors are given some form of training for the work they have to do. That some Spiritist churches, particularly the old-established ones of Nigerian origin, have attempted more complex theological formulations is evident from Turner's exhaustive study of the Church of the Lord, in which the author concludes that: ". . . nothing that we have found is so extensively pagan or heretical that we should have to revise our judgement that this is a Christian church."[12]

In their attitudes toward traditional religion, the Spiritist churches are no less opposed than any of the other churches in the community. Given their interest in healing and revelation, this opposition to traditional competitors may not be altogether surprising. But fear of competition from such sources does not, in itself, account for the manner in which the churches have avoided any significant measure of syncretization of Christian and traditional ritual. The major aims of Spiritism and traditional Effutu religion are, as we have seen, closely similar: both seek, above all else, to combat threats to health, vitality, and mental well-being; and both rely upon forms of spirit possession and mediumship in this effort. But there has been relatively little borrowing from traditional religion's store of ritual techniques, apart from the use of water for healing in some churches, the baptismal bathing rites of Waternakaba and Christ Divine Healing Church, and the occasional slaughtering of sheep as "burnt offerings" in groups such as Church of the Lord and Church of the Lord Mission. No effort has been made, for example,

to incorporate the traditional libation into Spiritism, since this is viewed by church leaders as an integral part of both the ancestral cult and the propitiation of traditional deities, adherence to which is discouraged on the grounds that "man cannot serve two masters."

In a review essay dealing with Peel's study of the Aladuras, Horton acknowledges the importance of social-structural changes associated with conversion to Christianity, but argues that it is their impact upon the traditional Yoruba religious belief system which effectively prepares the way for successful missionizing.[13] These changes, which are said to be due to the operation of "non-missionary factors," help break down the microcosmic, local community whose affairs are underpinned by lesser gods and spirits, and extend people's awareness of, and involvement in, the macrocosmic, wider world, whose affairs are underpinned by the Supreme Being. In the process, traditional religion undergoes an adaptive shift toward monolatry, for as the lesser spirits lose significance as theoretic entities for explaining, predicting, and controlling events in the space-time world, so does religious attention focus increasingly upon the Supreme Being. Only when the shift toward monolatry is well advanced may we reasonably expect significant missionary success in terms of large-scale conversions, since the monotheistic appeal of Christianity is unlikely to meet with a broad, positive response until the traditionally *otiose* Supreme Being has begun to assume a more active and concerned role in the minds of potential converts.

That traditional African religions *could* adapt in this manner seems eminently reasonable and logical, and one can sympathize with Horton in his apparent bafflement that one particular critic should find the suggestion so odd.[14] Unfortunately, this intellectualist theory of conversion cannot be adequately tested in the southern Ghanaian context, since we have little or no information on the dynamics of traditional religion during the colonial period; monolatric shifts are difficult to detect and the presence of missionaries throughout this period poses problems for an explanation in terms of "non-missionary factors."[15] Among the Effutu the number of currently "active" gods accounts for only about one-half of all known Effutu gods, many of whom appear to have lost their former significance. We cannot be sure, however, when and under what circumstances the "inactive" gods slipped into obscurity. *Nyimpo*, the Effutu Supreme Being, is nowadays felt to be approachable indirectly through the lesser gods, but again we do not know if this has always been the case, or if it represents an adaptive response to changes which have taken place during the colonial period. If a monolatric shift is indeed involved here, it has not proceeded far enough to prompt traditional priests to develop a cult of Nyimpo, nor to attempt to approach him in a direct manner. Effutu awareness of, and involvement in, the world outside is more clearly attested to in the global perspective taken by *Penkye Otu* during the *Ebisatsir* forecast, as well as in the local adoption of foreign deities such as *Tigare* and *Sakegya*.[16]

Horton's "monolatric shift" thesis reduces missions to the role of catalysts in the conversion process, or to "stimulators and accelerators of changes which were 'in the air' anyway; triggers for reactions in which they do not always appear amongst the end products."[17] It is not difficult to acknowledge, with Horton, the secular constraints which imposed themselves upon the missionaries. Indeed, it would appear that the missionaries themselves, despite a tendency to recognize "the hand of God" as the ultimate explanation of misssion success or failure, were usually aware of such constraints as proximate causes of failure and could hardly fail to appreciate the advantages which came from an extension of colonial authority and the expansion of trade and commerce.[18] It is quite another matter, however, to accept the view that mission influence was necessarily limited to pushing converts in the direction they were headed for in any case.

Our main difficulty with Horton's thesis has to do with his concept of "non-missionary" change-causing factors. These factors are nowhere clearly identified, although some clues are offered in the course of a "thought experiment" designed by Horton to assess the likely effects of various changes, "minus Islam and Christianity."[19] The most important of these changes are said to be those resulting in "dramatic improvements in communications, with accompanying economic and political developments that override the boundaries between the various microcosms."[20] If we assume that these are the sorts of changes which result from "non-missionary factors" (a reasonable assumption, since missionaries are to be "thought away" at this juncture) it becomes apparent that the experiment has a distinct air of unreality about it. For while we know that the changes cited could occur "minus" the missionaries, we also know that they did, in fact, take place with direct missionary involvement. Through their educational activities, which involved instruction in the language of colonial politics and economics, the missions contributed in a direct way to those improvements in communications which Horton mentions; and mission education also involved the inculcation of western values and training in marketable skills, both of which contributed directly to the breakdown of microcosmic, traditional boundaries. It is possible to exclude missionary factors from a discussion of social change in southern Ghana only if we operate with an artificially restricted view of the missionary role, one which would focus exclusively on the religious ideals of "pure mission" and ignores the actualities of missionizing and their consequences.[21]

Spiritism was a novel religious response to a host of everyday problems and difficulties, most of which were not new. Its roots are to be found in the colonial situation, particularly in the encounter between traditional religion and mission Christianity, but it was not a political reaction to foreign domination or mission authority. The themes of racial discrimination and injustice were conspicuously absent in the formative years of Ghanaian Spiritism and even at the height of nationalist enthusiasm in the late 1960's,

when the Spiritist churches expanded rapidly, it is difficult to see the emerging groups as movements of political protest. The appearance of Spiritist groups pointed up some of the more serious shortcomings of the Christian missions, but the majority of their members were (and are at present) people with no prior affiliations with mission churches.[22] And since Spiritist church founders with such prior affiliations normally suffered expulsion (rather than having voluntarily left the mission church) one wonders if the new movements were not due to a reaction *of* missions, rather than, as is commonly supposed, a reaction *to* missions.[23]

As minority religious groups which stand on the periphery of the local Christian community, it is tempting to apply the term "sect" to Winneba's Spiritist bodies. Most, however, fit very uncomfortably into this category: they are not so much opposed to the world as they are seeking to grapple with some of its more unpleasant features, particularly in the form of sickness and personal misfortune; and while they point to the "lack of spirituality" in other churches, they themselves subscribe in large measure to the orthodox doctrines espoused by the denominations, whose ecclesiastical structures often form models for Spiritist church organization.

The Spiritists

At first the Spiritist response was deemed appropriate only by a very small minority of Winneba residents in the 1930's and for several decades the appearance and existence of their churches seem to have aroused relatively little interest in the community. Today, after nearly fifty years of development and growth, these churches are no longer obscure and their existence can hardly be overlooked, yet they still enjoy the support of only a minority of the population. Who are these Spiritists and why did they adopt this particular interpretation of Christianity?

Unlike most other churches in Winneba, the local Spiritist assemblies were usually formed by persons who were Effutu and who had recently come to find in Spiritism a convincing answer to the problem of sickness. Most of these local initiators had some prior affiliation with a Christian mission or orthodox denomination, but the charter members of their groups were predominantly, though not exclusively, Effutu pagans. Later a number of Spiritist assemblies were introduced in the course of the regional or national expansion of particular churches and while the local founders in such instances were typically "strangers," the original converts were again mainly Effutu pagans.

We have no detailed information on the social background of the early Spiritist leaders in Winneba, but the indications are that they were fairly ordinary people, mainly in traditional occupations such as fishing, farming, and petty trading, and that they included women as well as men. The more modern leaders tend to be of a somewhat different type, yet they do not appear

to be far removed, in their social experiences, from the majority of people in Winneba. Some have certainly received a better education than many residents of the town, but they are not highly educated persons. An examination of their parents' occupations suggests that these leaders are of the common people, while their own career histories indicate that most of them know, from first-hand experience, the fears and hopes which are so regularly expressed by those who seek their help. They are admired and respected by the members of their churches, but they are not objects of awe or blind adulation and they must continue to demonstrate their effectiveness as healers and visionaries or face the prospect of a loss of prestige and a dwindling following. Within their assemblies they possess spiritual powers unmatched by others, but they are not messiahs, answerable only to God and beyond the influence of social constraints. A few possess considerable dramatic flair, but they are not outlandish figures or "larger-than-life" characters who overwhelm others through the sheer force of their personalities.

Despite their general "ordinariness," it is possible to detect, in their social backgrounds and life experiences, certain circumstances which may have *predisposed* them to a career as Spiritist leader: education of a type which can raise aspirations, but which is usually deficient in the quality necessary for success in well-paid, secure, and prestigious occupations; a degree of occupational and geographical mobility which might broaden personal horizons or intensify personal dissatisfactions beyond the ordinary, normal levels; and personal encounters with misfortunes and difficulties—unemployment, sickness, marital problems, etc.—which may appear commonplace to the outsider, yet assume crisis proportions for the sufferer. Not all of the leaders experienced all of these situations, or experienced them in exactly the same ways; and there are doubtless many other persons in Ghana who have faced similar difficulties, but who have reacted to them in quite different ways. These fairly common, recurring features in the life-histories of local leaders help us to see why the particular course of action they took might "make sense" to them. Other courses of action were certainly possible and, indeed, the majority of these Spiritist leaders had explored such alternatives at some time in their lives. Here we must confess, with Peel, the sociologist's inability "to probe further the precise causation of *this* doctrine in the mind of *that* person."[24] If such an admission seems to leave the door open to phenomenological explanations in terms of "spiritual hunger,"[25] or "creative religious impulses,"[26] perhaps this is as it should be; for it would be claiming too much for this, or any other, sociological study of religious groups were we to pretend that it explains fully the motives and intentions of those who lead or found such groups.

From the viewpoints of the leaders themselves, their pre-Spiritist experiences are all part of God's plan for them, part of a gradual, but inexorable, "showing of the way" toward an inevitable destination. It is difficult for the sociologist to deal with this kind of reconstruction of events on

its own terms, to offer evidence which might support or refute the views of persons who say that they do what they do because of divine direction. Again, we can only point to certain known circumstances in their social backgrounds and life-experiences which may have rendered them more susceptible to the call of God or, less charitably, which may have deluded them into thinking that divine direction was at work in their choice of career. Some of the directive visions appear as little more than wishful thinking ("I admire the Prophet who healed me, would like to be as he is, and wish that I were by his side") or delusions of power ("The town is burning and only I can save the people because of my special gifts"), yet we cannot, with any confidence, safely distinguish between "bogus" and "genuine" visions and dreams.

That scepticism which is born out of a western, rationalist orientation and nurtured by exposure to various forms of individualistic, self-interested behavior, prompts us to consider the possibility that some of these divinely-inspired leaders were directed by more down-to-earth considerations. Self-denial has not been a dominating ideal in the Ghanaian religious tradition and priests were not expected to live at a material standard lower than that of the general population. Within the local Christian tradition, the sacrifices of missionaries were probably best understood by those who knew what was being "given up," rather than by the converts, to whom missionaries often appeared as privileged and protected persons.[27] It is not suggested that all, or even some, of the local Spiritist leaders derive from their positions material rewards which are greater than they could have hoped for otherwise, for we have seen that their incomes are modest and often irregular. We simply suggest that in this cultural context there is no reason to regard a religious vocation as a passport to poverty and no reason to wonder if God, in directing one into his ministry, does so in a way which takes care of one's material wants also.

From their pioneering days up to the present time, Spiritists have expressed confidence in the *spiritual superiority* of their churches over others, yet this has never been accompanied by the erection of sectarian barriers to those who would join them, nor have they been strident in their criticisms of other Christian bodies. Of all kinds of churches in the community they are the least exclusive in the matter of admitting people into full membership and the least demanding in terms of eligibility to receive baptism or in what is expected of probationers. And they also permit a loose form of affiliation on the part of those who seek some of the benefits of Spiritism, but who are reluctant to commit themselves fully to the Spiritist life. This openness of welcome has not resulted in the development of balanced, cross-sectional memberships: the Spiritist churches are, in comparison with other local churches, ethnically more homogenous, have a disproportionately large number of female members, and recruit heavily from the lower socio-economic groups in the community. That they are aware of the relatively low socio-economic status of the bulk of their members is evidenced by their oft-

expressed need for "intellectuals" (i.e., educated persons) to "build up the church." Formally, the Spiritist churches are organized along familiar, denominational lines, but in practice this resemblance turns out to be somewhat superficial. There are few flourishing clubs or societies within these Spiritist assemblies and the activities of members are clustered around the regular program of services and healing sessions, with occasional "special events" being staged in collaboration with fellow-Spiritists from other local churches, or from assemblies outside Winneba.

Spiritist Church Growth and Future Prospects

Although reliable information on Spiritist church growth is lacking for the period up to 1957, it appears that the introduction of M.D.C.C., St. Anthony Healing Power Church, and the Twelve Apostles in the 1930's did not immediately spark off a burgeoning local Spiritist movement. Apart from the introduction of a second branch of Twelve Apostles and the founding of the Church of the Lord assembly, no new Spiritist assemblies appeared in Winneba between 1932 and 1957, although the same period saw the arrival of three Pentecostal sects, one American Adventist body, and one orthodox denomination in the town. It was in the decade following the attainment of Ghanaian independence that local Spiritism enjoyed spectacular success, the period 1957 to 1967 being characterized by a remarkable growth in membership.

Between 1967 and 1977 the membership of the Spiritist churches continued to grow, but at a much slower rate than before. There is some evidence to suggest that the recruitment of new members has become increasingly difficult for these churches and that they are now recruiting less heavily from among the pagan population of the town. The loss of momentum in Spiritist church growth stands in sharp contrast to the renewed growth in the membership of the denominations and, to a lesser extent, in the Pentecostal and American sects. The increasing popularity of the local denominations would seem to be directly related to their renewed efforts in the field of education, which provides them with important agencies for recruitment of new members and also contributes to the integration of these churches into the local community.

Despite the increasingly competitive nature of the religious marketplace, the Spiritists have not felt compelled to enter into formal, cooperative relations with other local churches to any significant extent. There has been little obvious change in inter-church relations since 1968, when the local Christian community appeared to be notably lacking in cohesion and unity. The movement toward inter-church communication and cooperation at the local level, begun by the formation of the Local Council of Churches in 1972, has not altered this situation to any great degree. The Spiritist churches are still generally viewed as *nyamanyama* and, with only two exceptions, have shown little interest in cultivating closer ties with other Christian bodies.

Spiritist attitudes in these matters may change in the future, but at the present time most Spiritist leaders see little need for any radical re-examination of their relations with other branches of Christianity. Their confidence may not be misplaced, for while the winning of new converts has become more difficult since 1967, most local assemblies have shown themselves to be remarkably durable, with an ability to weather the storms occasioned by secessions and the loss of leaders. The proliferation of Spiritist assemblies has continued, even if much of this has assumed a "cannibalistic" form, whose outlines are revealed most sharply in the spread of Twelve Apostles. A few Spiritist churches stand out as expanding and flourishing groups during this period; each of these has had its own special attractions for new members and there appears to be no single or common formula for success, although all three have national leaders who are well-known and whose activities are widely publicized.

In the long run, developments in the fields of education and public health may be expected to threaten the core of Spiritist faith and induce changes in Spiritist goals, theologies, and practices. What forms of adaptation may occur can only be guessed at now: some Spiritist groups may seek to retain their this-worldly orientation in an increasingly secular and complex society by adopting a position similar to the "manipulationist" sects of the west, which offer members a special *gnosis* and method for attaining mastery of their life-situations;[28] others may abandon the search for miracles and sudden cures, but retain much of their enthusiasm and spontaniety in seeking a spiritual revival, as Pentecostal, evangelical movements in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized society. There will be some, no doubt, which will persist as a last refuge for the chronically underprivileged and for those who share the Spiritist self-conception voiced by Prophet Jehu-Appiah: "Politically, we are the harmless; economically, we are feeble; socially, we are downtrodden; but spiritually, we are more than giants."[29]

Notes for Chapter Seven

[1]Peel, ibid.

[2]Sundkler, ibid.

[3]M. L. Daneel, *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches*, Mouton, The Hague, 1974.

[4]D. B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1968.

[5]B. R. Wilson, *Religious Sects*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1970.

[6]This typology was fashioned initially as an aid to understanding Christian sects in western societies; it is applied to religious movements in non-western societies by Wilson in his *Magic and the Millenium*.

[7]Sundkler, ibid.

[8]Daneel, ibid.

[9]Wilson, *Religious Sects*, p. 36.

[10]Fernandez' typology of independent African religious movements focusses upon group symbolism (e.g., expressive or instrumental) and cultural orientation (e.g., traditional or modern) and yields depictions which tend to emphasize the latent functions of the groups, rather than their primary religious orientations; see J. W. Fernandez, "African Religious Movements—Types and Dynamics," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 2, 1964, pp. 531–49.

[11]Williamson, ibid., pp. 162–63.

[12]Turner, ibid., vol. 2, p. 368.

[13]R. Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa*, vol. 41, 1971, pp. 85–108.

[14]H. Fisher, "Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa," *Africa*, vol. 43, 1973, pp. 27–40.

[15]Ifeka-Moller suggests that Horton's evidence for monolatric shifts in traditional Yoruba religion is drawn from a period when missionaries were active and accuses him of "circular reasoning"; see G. Ifeka-Moller, "White Power: Social Structural Factors in Conversion to Christianity, Eastern Nigeria, 1921–1966," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 8, 1974, pp. 55–72.

[16]It is claimed, for example, that *Penkye Otu* forecast both the "Kaiser War" (1914–18 War) and the great Influenza Epidemic of 1919.

[17]Horton, ibid., p. 104.

[18]Williamson, ibid., p. 16n. and pp. 18–23.

[19]Horton, ibid., p. 102.

[20]Horton, ibid., p. 102.

[21]The problem of missionary ideals versus actualities is discussed in T. O. Beidelman, "Social Theory and the Study of Christian Missions," *Africa*, vol. 44, 1974, pp. 235–49; and in R. W. Wyllie, "Some Contradictions in Missionizing," *Africa*, vol. 46, 1976, pp. 196–204.

[22]This is also the case in the independent churches among the southern Shona, the majority of whose members had never paid full allegiance to any mission church; see Daneel, ibid., p. 5.

[23]The "reaction to missions" theme is stressed in Barrett, ibid.

[24]Peel, ibid., p. 294.

[25]H. W. Turner, "African Prophet Movements," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. 61, 1963, p. 115.

[26]Daneel, ibid., p. 309, while recognizing the importance of various "background conditioning factors," argues that independent churches "are in the first place religious institutions and that they thrive to a large extent on the creative religious impulses born from within and stimulated by the Gospel, that they do not exist merely by virtue of socio-political pressures."

[27]H. W. Mobley, *The Ghanaian's Image of the Missionary*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1970, pp. 80–89.

[28]Wilson, ibid., pp. 141–66.

[29]From the "Welcome Address" of the Prophet at the 1967 Peaceful Year Celebration.

Appendix A
STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Table 1. Winneba Church Full Members Aged 15 Yrs. and Over*

Church	*1957*	*1967*	*1977*	*% Increase*	
				1957–67	*1967–77*
Denominations	1301	1491	4168	14.6	179.5
American Sects	130	138	240	6.1	73.9
Pentecostal Sects	291	345	671	18.5	94.4
Spiritist Churches	181	973	1262	437.5	29.7
All Churches	1903	2947	6341	54.8	115.1

*Source: Recording secretaries and local church leaders.

Table 2. Scriptural Readings in Church Services, 1967–68

Church	*Av. No. of Readings During Service*	*Av. No. of Verses Read During Service*
Denominations	2.6	15.1
American Sects[1]	2.5	15.5
Pentecostal Sects	2.5	9.0
Spiritist Churches	3.6	25.8

[1]Excluding Jehovah's Witnesses, whose service meetings we were unable to attend.

Table 3. Themes of Sermons and Lessons in Spiritist Services, 1967–68

Theme	*Of Sermon*	*Of Lesson*	*Total*
Christian virtues	3	7	10
Jesus' miraculous works	1	8	9
Gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit	—	8	8
Everlasting life	2	2	4
Jesus the Good Shepherd	1	3	4
Worship and praise God[1]	1	2	3
Jesus the Son of God	—	3	3
Listen to prophecy	1	1	2
Powers and blessings of God	—	1	1
David overcomes Goliath	1	—	1
Total	10	35	45

[1]Emphasis here was on praising God "joyously" and justifying the use of musical instruments and dancing in services.

Table 4. M.D.C.C. (Winneba) Sick Returns: 1967 and 1976

Ailments	*Patients Received*		*Patients Healed*		*Deaths*		*Patients Remaining*	
	1967	*1976*	*1967*	*1976*	*1967*	*1976*	*1967*	*1976*
Malaria and other fevers	70	62	68	50	—	—	2	12
Constipation	54	72	53	65	—	—	1	7
Pregnancy	53	39	47	37	—	—	6	2
Worms	47	29	38	18	—	—	9	11
Convulsions and fits	43	108	40	86	—	—	3	22
Backache	40	54	22	34	—	—	18	20
Children's cough	38	59	23	45	—	—	15	14
Uterus discharge	33	31	32	29	—	—	1	2
Barrenness	29	15	25	9	—	—	4	6
Dysentery	26	21	15	18	—	—	11	3
Yaws	21	2	21	2	—	—	—	—
Boils	20	11	16	9	—	—	4	2
Stomach pains	19	23	18	23	—	—	1	—
Drunkenness	18	28	15	23	—	—	3	5
Vomiting	15	31	12	29	1	—	2	2
Rheumatism	15	24	10	19	—	—	5	5
Smallpox	14	14	13	13	1	—	—	1
Swollen legs	13	21	8	13	—	—	5	8
Madness	13	3	13	3	—	—	—	—
Eye troubles	12	4	8	3	—	—	4	1
Sleeping sickness	11	13	7	11	—	—	4	2
Waist pains	10	19	7	15	2	2	1	2
Tuberculosis	8	1	8	1	—	—	—	—
Witchcraft	7	4	6	4	—	—	1	—
Dizziness	7	5	5	4	—	—	2	1
Sore throat	4	9	3	6	—	—	1	3
Impotence	4	19	3	15	—	—	1	4
Ear troubles	3	9	3	7	—	—	—	2
Gonorrhea	3	3	3	3	—	—	—	—
Total	650	733	542	594	4	2	104	137
% Increase 1967–76	12.7		9.5		-50.0		31.9	

Table 5. Statistical Profile of Spiritist Leaders*

Sex	*1968* %	*1977* %	*Age*	*1968* %	*1977* %
Male	78.5	75.0	23–34 yrs.	42.8	7.1
Female	21.4	25.0	35–44 yrs.	28.5	64.2
Total	99.9 (N 14)	100.0 (N 28)	45–54 yrs.	14.2	21.4
			55–64 yrs.	7.1	3.5
			65 yrs. & over	7.1	3.5
			Total	99.7 (N 14)	99.7 (N 28)

Tribe	*1968* %	*1977* %	*Education*	*1968* %	*1977* %
Effutu	42.8	60.7	Nil	35.7	50.0
Fanti	28.5	28.5	Primary	35.7	32.1
Other	28.5	10.7	Middle	21.4	14.2
Total	99.8 (N 14)	99.9 (N 28)	Secondary	7.1	3.5
			Total	99.9 (N 14)	99.8 (N 28)

Previous Occupation	*1968* %	*1977* %
Professional	7.1	—
Clerical	7.1	21.4
Sales	21.4	25.0
Farming, fishing	—	14.2
Craft, production process, laboring	64.2	39.2
Total	99.8 (N 14)	99.8 (N 28)

Religion at Birth	*1968* %	*1977* %	*Initial Christian Affiliation*	*1968* %	*1977* %
Pagan	42.8	67.8	Denomination	85.7	46.4
Christian	50.0	32.1	Pentecostal Sect	—	10.7
Moslem	7.1	—	Spiritist Church	14.2	42.8
Total	99.9 (N 14)	99.1 (N 28)	Total	99.9 (N 14)	99.9 (N 28)

*Source: Interviews with Spiritist leaders.

Table 6. Statistical Profile of Spiritist Full Members*

Sex	*1967* %	*1977* %	*Tribe*	*1967* %	*1977* %
Male	24.3	22.7	Effutu	80.1	84.4
Female	75.6	77.2	Fanti	16.3	12.9
Total	99.9 (N 973)	99.9 (N 1262)	Other	3.4	2.6
			Total	99.8 (N 973)	99.9 (N 1262)

Age	*1967*		*1977*	
	Men %	*Women* %	*Men* %	*Women* %
15–24 yrs.	16.8	13.0	17.7	14.9
25–44 yrs.	51.4	52.1	51.2	49.9
45–64 yrs.	25.7	28.2	24.0	25.9
65 yrs. & over	5.9	6.5	6.9	9.1
Total	99.8 (N 237)	99.8 (N 736)	99.8 (N 287)	99.8 (N 975)

Duration of Membership	*1967* %	*1977* %
Member from birth	4.7	5.0
Convert	95.2	94.9
Less than 5 yrs.	60.8	62.2
5–9 yrs.	30.6	27.6
10–19 yrs.	4.8	5.1
20 yrs. or more	3.6	4.9
Total	99.9 (N 973)	99.9 (N 1262)

Occupations	*1967*		*1977*	
	Men %	*Women* %	*Men* %	*Women* %
Professional	1.6	—	1.0	0.7
Clerical	6.3	1.2	4.8	1.9
Sales	9.2	70.3	6.9	68.1
Farming, fishing	56.5	19.7	59.9	21.9
Craft, production process, laboring	13.9	4.3	14.6	1.8
Other	8.4	0.8	7.3	0.5
Retired, unemployed	3.7	3.5	5.2	4.9
Total	99.6 (N 237)	99.8 (N 736)	99.7 (N 287)	99.8 (N 975)

*Source: Recording secretaries and local church leaders.

Table 7. Statistical Profile of Three Congregations in 1977*

	A.M.E.Z.	*M.D.C.C.*	*Salvation*	*All*
Sex	%	%	%	%
Male	48.6	42.1	30.4	41.8
Female	51.3	57.8	69.5	58.1
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.9 (N 38)	99.9 (N 23)	99.9 (N 98)
Age				
15–24 yrs.	27.0	10.5	30.4	22.4
25–44 yrs.	35.1	50.0	47.8	43.8
45–64 yrs.	27.0	34.2	21.7	27.5
65 yrs. & over	10.8	5.2	—	6.1
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.9 (N 38)	99.9 (N 23)	99.8 (N 98)
Tribe				
Effutu	89.1	73.6	100.0	85.7
Fanti	8.1	15.7		9.1
Other	2.7	10.5	—	5.1
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.8 (N 38)	100.0 (N 23)	99.9 (N 98)
Birthplace				
Winneba District	86.4	55.2	86.9	74.4
Central Region (other than Winneba)	5.4	23.6	—	11.2
Other region	8.1	21.0	13.0	14.2
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.8 (N 38)	99.9 (N 23)	99.8 (N 98)
Education				
(Males)				
Nil	5.5	62.5	71.4	39.0
Primary	11.1	18.7	14.2	14.6
Middle	50.0	12.5	14.2	29.2
Secondary	22.2	6.2	—	12.1
Teacher training	11.1	—	—	4.8
Total	99.9 (N 18)	99.9 (N 16)	99.8 (N 7)	99.7 (N 41)
(Females)				
Nil	52.6	68.1	93.7	70.1
Primary	5.2	13.6	6.2	8.7
Middle	31.5	13.6	—	15.7
Secondary	5.2	4.5	—	3.5
Teacher training	5.2	—	—	1.7
Total	99.7 (N 19)	99.8 (N 22)	99.9 (N 16)	99.7 (N 57)

Table 7. (continued)

	A.M.E.Z.	*M.D.C.C.*	*Salvation*	*All*
Frequency of Church Attendance				
Less than once a week	8.1	5.2	13.0	8.1
Once a week	78.3	52.6	30.4	57.1
More than once a week, but not everyday	5.4	10.5	21.7	11.2
Every day	8.1	31.5	34.7	23.4
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.8 (N 38)	99.8 (N 23)	99.8 (N 98)
Occupation				
(Males)				
Professional	27.7	6.2	—	14.6
Clerical	5.5	6.2	—	4.8
Sales	16.6	—	14.2	9.7
Farming, fishing	—	18.7	42.8	14.6
Craft, production process, laboring	11.1	52.5	28.5	34.1
Other	5.5	—	—	2.4
Retired, unemployed	33.3	6.2	14.2	19.5
Total	99.7 (N 18)	99.8 (N 16)	99.7 (N 7)	99.7 (N 41)
(Females)				
Professional	10.5	—	—	3.5
Clerical	10.5	4.5	—	5.2
Sales	42.1	31.8	87.5	50.8
Farming, fishing	5.2	9.0	6.2	7.0
Craft, production process, laboring	10.5	27.2	—	14.0
Other	5.2	—	—	1.7
Retired, unemployed	15.7	27.2	6.2	17.5
Total	99.7 (N 19)	99.7 (N 22)	99.9 (N 16)	99.7 (N 57)
No. of Voluntary Association Memberships per person				
Nil	72.9	65.7	100.0	1.0
One	18.9	23.6	—	6.1
Two	8.1	7.8	—	16.3
Three	—	2.6	—	76.5
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.7 (N 38)	100.0 (N 23)	99.9 (N 98)

Table 7. (continued)

	A.M.E.Z.	*M.D.C.C.*	*Salvation*	*All*
Sibling's Religion				
Same as member	37.3	33.0	29.5	33.9
Other (denomination)	36.5	37.7	9.8	31.1
Other (Spiritist)	4.0	3.9	7.0	4.6
Other (Pentecostal or American sect)	3.2	1.5	2.8	2.4
Moslem	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5
Pagan	17.0	22.0	49.2	26.1
Total (siblings)	99.6 (N 123)	99.6 (N 127)	99.7 (N 71)	99.6 (N 321)
Wife's Religion				
Same as husband	66.6	75.0	25.0	65.5
Other (denomination)	33.3	18.7	—	20.6
Other (Spiritist)	—	—	—	—
Other (Pentecostal or American sect)	—	—	—	—
Pagan	—	6.2	75.0	13.7
Total (husbands)	99.9 (N 9)	99.9 (N 16)	100.0 (N 4)	99.8 (N 29)
Husband's Religion				
Same as wife	54.5	41.6	14.2	40.0
Other (denomination)	27.2	58.3	14.2	36.6
Other (Spiritist)	—	—	14.2	3.3
Other (Pentecostal or American sect	18.1	—	14.2	10.0
Pagan	—	—	42.8	10.0
Total (wives)	99.8 (N 11)	99.9 (N 12)	99.6 (N 7)	99.9 (N 30)
Father's Religion at Birth				
Same as member	2.7	5.2	—	5.1
Other (denomination)	40.5	44.7	8.6	32.6
Other (Spiritist)	—	—	—	—
Other (Pentecostal or American sect)	—	—	—	—
Pagan	56.7	50.0	91.3	62.2
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.9 (N 38)	99.9 (N 23)	99.9 (N 98)
Father's Religion Subsequently				
Same as member	13.5	23.6	13.0	17.3
Other (denomination)	59.4	47.3	13.0	43.8
Other (Spiritist)	—	2.6	—	1.0
Other (Pentecostal or American sect)	2.7	—	—	1.0
Pagan	24.3	26.3	73.9	36.7
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.8 (N 38)	99.9 (N 23)	99.8 (N 98)

Table 7. (continued)

	A.M.E.Z.	*M.D.C.C.*	*Salvation*	*All*
First Generation to Adopt Christianity				
Own	8.1	21.0	34.7	19.3
Father's	48.6	34.2	34.7	39.7
Grandfather's	18.9	31.5	26.0	25.5
Great-grandfather's	24.3	13.1	4.3	15.3
Total	99.9 (N 37)	99.8 (N 38)	99.7 (N 23)	99.8 (N 98)

*Source: Interviews with church members.

Appendix B
EXAMPLES OF SPIRITIST SERVICES

Cherubim and Seraphim

The church's meeting-place is located less than fifty yards from *Abosomba*, the meeting-place of the Effutu gods. It is a building constructed of aluminum sheets upon a wooden frame and is situated in a wide courtyard between some houses. Before the building is a sandy area surrounded by a low wall, in the middle of which is a white wooden cross. This area is known as the "Mercy Ground."

The Sunday morning service began shortly after 9 a.m. Inside the church, which was very clean and bright, about twenty women, six men and thirteen children were sitting upon wooden benches. A few of the women—the Crossbearers—wore white gowns, while the others were in traditional African dress. Two of the men wore European style shirts and slacks and the others were dressed in African cloths. The pastor was clad in a brilliant scarlet cassock while his assistant, the Captain, wore a white cassock with a red sash. At one end of the church was a sanctuary, separated from the main body of the church by a low, wooden partition. In the sanctuary there stood a chair and a table, on top of which were seven lighted candles, two vases of flowers, a bell, and a wooden crucifix. In front of the sanctuary were two large drums painted bright red. Several devotional pictures hung upon the walls.

The service, which was conducted in Fanti, began with a hymn, sung very slowly and softly. The Captain and another man acted as drummers, while an old man joined in by ringing a small hand-bell in time with the music. When the hymn had ended the pastor (or "Bishop," as he is styled) went into the sanctuary where he knelt upon the floor and led the members in a prayer.

Several hymns were sung in quick succession, the members swaying and dancing as far as the restrictions of the benches permitted. Then, as the Captain moved around the church with the thurible, the pastor returned again to the sanctuary. Here he offered a prayer for the *Omanhene* of Winneba, the state elders, the general population, and for my assistant and me. Finally, he prayed for the Captain, the Crossbearers, and members of the church. As he prayed the members knelt facing the sanctuary, with heads bowed and eyes closed.

More hymns followed without pause and then the pastor went once again into the sanctuary. This time he prayed for divine light, so that the faithful

might better understand God's word. He prayed too for the repose of the souls of all the faithful who had departed. After this the assembly knelt and recited the Lord's Prayer, which was followed by another hymn. The first lesson from the Bible was read by the pastor from his place in the sanctuary and this was a lengthy passage from Acts 16: 1–32, recounting the trials of Paul and Silas in Macedonia, culminating in their miraculous escape from harm during the earthquake.

After this passage was read the assembly stood and a woman led them in a hymn. Then came the second lesson, again read by the pastor from the sanctuary. This time he read Romans 13: 1–14 on the theme of Christian virtues. This was followed by another hymn, after which the assembly members stood up and, with arms raised, professed their faith by reciting the Apostles' Creed. Then they fell to their knees as the pastor prayed, the sound of his voice being interrupted from time to time by a woman who kept emitting a strange choking cry. Just then there was a commotion of some kind in the street outside the church and the Captain, who had been moving around the church with his thurible, moved over to the window to get a closer look at what was going on outside. The pastor, meanwhile, continued with his prayer.

When he was finished, the pastor called upon three members to come forward to say special prayers. The first of these was a woman who prayed for the welfare of Ghana in general and Winneba in particular. She was followed by a man who prayed for the sick, the disabled, the barren, and the unemployed. The third prayer, also offered by a man, was for all the Spiritist churches in Ghana, but especially for those in Winneba. The pastor concluded this series of prayers by asking God to bestow all his gifts upon the members. For a few minutes there was a lull in the proceedings. The pastor and a Crossbearer entered into a private discussion, the subject of which we could not ascertain. There was some fidgeting on the part of many of the members. Then the woman who had been talking to the pastor gave a short talk on the conduct appropriate to members of the church.

After this the pastor gave his sermon. Although this was quite short, it was interrupted frequently by cries of "Halleluja!" and "Praise the Lord!" from the assembly, or by a few verses of song initiated by some members. During the sermon the Captain and a woman talked quietly to each other and members of the asssembly began to show signs of restlessness. Some left the church for short periods, while the children began to chatter among themselves and a few wandered aimlessly outside to the courtyard.

When the sermon had ended the pastor called upon people present to come forward and testify to God's goodness. The first to respond was a woman who expressed her thanks for God's protection during her recent travels and she concluded by singing: "Let us thank God, truly he exists. . . ." Another woman placed 20 pesewas (about 20 cents) in the offering bowl after telling how God had "worked miracles" for her. A man stood up and said that

God had been merciful to him and must be praised, ending by putting a few pennies in the bowl.

The Captain then initiated a hymn, stopping after he had been joined by the assembly. When he did so the singing faltered and, for a moment, appeared to be in danger of simply petering out. At this point a woman carried the hymn strongly, the others rallying to see it through another verse. After this near-failure the pastor asked all those who had "seen or heard anything" during the service or during the past week to come forward. Apparently no one had and there were no reports given. He then asked if any one had a dream they wished to relate. Here again there was no response.

After this came the offering, which was accompanied by a lively song:

Power, O Lord!
Power, O Lord!
Power, O Lord!
Power, Power, Power, O Lord!

This was sung as the members filed, dancing and swaying, past the offering bowl. The pastor and the Captain manned the drums, beating furiously upon them with their hands. Two women began to spin, with outstretched arms, before the sanctuary; another ran up and down the length of the church, leaping from bench to bench; yet another hopped on one leg in front of the drummers before falling to the floor.The Captain seized the thurible and ran swiftly around the church, leaving a trail of incense in his wake. Two men hurriedly pushed aside some of the benches as several women began to throw themselves around, knocking over the benches as they fell or stumbled.

The pastor, who had returned to the sanctuary during the dancing, now moved among the assembly. Carrying a metal rod, he laid this lightly upon the foreheads of those who came to kneel at his feet. Behind him a Crossbearer came and placed her small wooden crucifix upon the head of each kneeling person. Another held a bottle of water and, dipping her free hand into this, rubbed the abdomens of two childless women who knelt before her. In a little while this Crossbearer began to shudder violently with her hands clasped tightly before her chest and had to be held fast by her companions.

Then the Captain began to shudder and shake, slapping himself repeatedly upon the face. Several people ran forward to restrain him, but he broke free and started to turn somersaults upon the floor of the church. As he did so, his left eye remained tightly shut while his right eye rolled wildly in its socket. All the time he was shouting at the top of his voice, accusing the pastor of not having fasted. The pastor replied that he had indeed fasted and that the Captain was mistaken. The members now appeared to be highly amused at this turn of events and there was some giggling from the women. The Captain, however, was not to be put off so easily and repeated his charge several times as he writhed and shook. At this point the pastor hurried over to where we sat and explained that the Spirit had descended upon the Captain, who would

have to be taken outside to the Mercy Ground to recover. Then the Captain left the church, supported by the pastor, two women and a man and the members now began to disperse. Although the service was scheduled to finish at about 10:30 a.m., it was now after 1 p.m.

Christian Church

Across the street from Cherubim and Seraphim stands a dilapidated structure of battered aluminum sheets upon a wooden frame. This is the meetingplace of members of the Christian Church, popularly known as "Taylor's Church" in recognition of its founder, Apostle John Taylor. On a Friday evening at about 7:30 p.m. we entered this building to attend the major weekly service. Inside, a state of semi-darkness prevailed, the only illumination coming from a single pressure lamp which hissed steadily from its position in the rafters and a solitary candle which flickered feebly on top of the pastor's table.

Some fifty-five persons attended the service that evening. Of these, six were men, twenty-five women, and the remainder infants and older children. The women and children sat apart from the men, while the pastor and three elders were seated to the rear of the pastor's table, at some distance from the others. On the pastor's table there stood, apart from the candle, a hand-bell, two bibles, two hymn-books (Methodist), and two alarm clocks. At one side of the table was a large drum. Most members of the assembly wore traditional African dress, although a few of the younger men and girls wore western style clothes. The pastor was immaculate in a white, open-neck shirt and sharply creased white slacks.

The service, which was conducted in Fanti, opened with a rousing hymn, followed by a much slower one. The pastor then offered a prayer in which he gave thanks to God and placed the security and prosperity of the land in his hands. The prayer ended with a plea for the sick and especially for those who were in hospitals. The pastor then began to recite the Lord's Prayer, in which he was joined by the assembly. A woman at the rear of the church initiated a hymn which was continued with the participation of the assembly and this was sung in the call-and-response style. After this a very lively hymn was sung, during which the pastor beat enthusiastically upon the drum. The assembly then began to dance in a circle in the area between the pastor's table and the benches, clapping their hands in time with the singing. Two women swayed from side to side and then jumped and hopped around the floor of the church. By the close of the hymn these two lay prostrate upon the floor and had to be carried off to their places by friends.

The pastor then arose and, standing beside his table, read the first lesson. This was from John 13: 30–36, in which Jesus commands his disciples to "love one another" and tells them: "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." At the close of the reading the pastor cried "Praise Him!" and the assembly responded with "Amen!"

The pastor then moved back and forth among the assembly preaching upon the theme of the lesson. This was accompanied by much gesticulation on his part and he broke off several times to exhort his flock with cries of "Halleluja!" "Praise the Lord!" and "Praise Jesus!" He was interrupted just as frequently by cries from the members, who would sometimes sing several verses of a hymn during the course of the sermon. After about another fifteen minutes of this, the pastor read another passage from the scriptures, this time from John 10: 10–16, dealing with the theme of "The Good Shepherd." This was again followed by a short sermon from the pastor. In a shouting voice, accompanied by jerking movements of his head and legs, he preached and exhorted. When interrupted by a hymn, he would rush to the drum to beat it vigorously, or join in the dancing which invariably accompanied the singing. On one such occasion he led all the children in a dance around the floor of the church.

After some twenty minutes of preaching, singing, and dancing, the pastor read yet another passage from the Bible. This was from John 1: 11–16, which praises the glory and grace of Jesus. Again this was followed by more preaching, singing, and dancing. Shortly before this part of the service came to an end, the pastor and two other men began to drum furiously. The singing ceased and the assembly converged in a semi-circle around the dancers, clapping their hands and shouting "Praise the Lord!" and "Praise Him!"

When this tumultuous phase of the service had ended, there was a short pause while people returned to their seats, some women fanning themselves with handkerchiefs after their exertions. The pastor then announced that the assembly would sing Hymn 90 from the Methodist Hymnal, although there appeared to be only three copies of this Hymnal available. The hymn itself was sung very well, in a somewhat controlled fashion, with the pastor conducting the singers in the style of a choirmaster.

This was followed by a prayer offered by the pastor, in which he asked for God's blessing for an increase in the faith of the members, for greater understanding of the mysteries of the world and for greater love of one another. He then prayed for me and my assistant. Then came the offering. A brass pan was placed on top of the table and the members danced toward it, the children first, then the women, and lastly the men. After dancing past the table they formed a circle and the pastor moved into the center with the pan and prayed to God to accept the "poor offering" of his people and to bless them.

When the offering had been taken away by one of the elders, the pastor now prepared to heal the sick, while the assembly remained standing before the table. He prayed, asking: "Jesus, Our Light, Our Comforter, Our Protector, Great Healer, come down and heal your people of their diverse afflictions. . . ." The assembly than prayed aloud, each person praying individually but at the same time, so that it was impossible to hear exactly what they said. Now all the members of the assembly were on their knees,

while the pastor moved around laying his hands upon them praying rapidly as he did so. Suddenly, he seized one woman and cast her to the floor in the center of the circle and began to perform cartwheels around the inner part of the circle. One woman stood over her fallen companion while the others danced around with arms held on high. The woman on the floor began to twitch and shudder as she lay on her side with her arms behind her back. A few minutes later she was joined on the floor by five more women and a young man, all of whom rolled around, writhing and kicking. Other members of the assembly attended these individuals, tying the women's clothing tightly about their ankles, lest they should become exposed. The pastor then went among those on the floor and laid his hands upon each. At this they calmed down sufficiently to be able to go back to their seats normally, except for the first woman to fall, who hopped back to her place on one leg.

After a few minutes in which benches were rearranged and people cooled themselves with their handkerchiefs, a woman at the rear of the church initiated a song, which was continued in the call-and-response style. The pastor then closed the service, which had lasted less than two hours, by asking that "The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forever more." The assembly responded with "Amen!" and filed out into the street.

Dugan's Church

We reached Dugan's Church at about 9:30 on Sunday morning after walking along a narrow path through tall grass, which effectively screens the church from the roadway. The church itself consisted of a number of buildings: a wooden hut for patients, a concrete building for special prayers and gatherings, and a bamboo enclosure where several women had assembled and were already singing softly. As we approached, we were greeted by the Prophet, dressed in a white cassock which reached almost to the ground. His assistant, a much younger man, was dressed likewise. After showing us to our places the Prophet moved to a table which stood at one end of the enclosure. On top of the table were a number of items, including a hand-bell, a bible, an alarm clock, a box of candles, a bottle of "Florida Water," a writing pad, and a pen. While the women continued to sing, more people entered the enclosure to sit upon wooden benches which had been placed inside it.

After about fifteen minutes of singing, the Prophet suddenly picked up his bell, rang it vigorously, and, turning on his heel, walked off in the direction of the concrete building. He was followed by all those seated in the enclosure who, by this time, numbered about twenty-four women, six men, three young girls, and some twenty smaller children. Inside the building Dugan knelt before a candelabra with seven lighted candles, on each side of which hung a picture of Jesus. Surrounded by the members, now tightly crowded together in the small dark room, the Prophet implored the Holy Ghost to descend upon

them all. Then they recited the Apostles' Creed and Dugan began the first few words of a hymn: "Let us praise Him, for He is King. Let us thank Him, for He will be King always." When this was over the Prophet embarked upon a lengthy and wide-ranging prayer, in the course of which he was interrupted several times by cries of "Amen!" and "Halleluja!" from the assembly. He began by praising the Almighty God and went on to pray for the churches in Winneba, hospital patients, the *Omanhene*, the police, the local council, the people of Winneba, and an end to paganism. When he had finished, he rang his bell and immediately the members began to pray aloud, yet individually. This prayer lasted for about four minutes and was ended by the sound of the Prophet's bell. Another hymn followed and the Adoration was brought to an end by the members singing the Lord's Prayer.

The Prophet now led the members back across the courtyard to the enclosure. As they walked back they sang, "Heavenly King, we shall glorify you. . . ." Upon entering the enclosure they did not sit down but proceeded instead to sing and dance in a shuffling fashion around a wooden cross which stood before the Prophet's table. While the Prophet stood between the table and the cross, his assistant moved among the swaying, shuffling dancers. From time to time this assistant would bring persons forward to kneel before the Prophet. Three pregnant women were among the first to do so. The Prophet said prayers for them, in each case placing his left hand upon the woman's stomach and, with his right hand, anointing her head with a mixture of Florida Water and olive oil.

All the while the singing, dancing, hand-clapping, and drumming continued without pause. An old woman was brought before the Prophet, who placed his hand upon her head and, keeping it there, circled slowly around her three times. This done, he rubbed her arms briskly with oil and water before his assistant led her back among the dancers. Mothers with infants were then led to kneel at the feet of the Prophet and, for one small boy with withered legs, the Prophet urged the assembly to clap harder, dance more energetically, and sing louder. Throughout the healing the Prophet appeared to be quite calm and methodical and he gazed in an absent fashion over the heads of those to whom he ministered.

Once more the bell brought the music to an end and the Prophet began to pray for the young people present, his prayer being interrupted frequently by cries from the assembly. This was followed by another hymn, at the close of which the Prophet rang his bell and the assembly cried out, "Praise the Lord." Suddenly the Prophet gave a long, plaintive cry and threw his arms skywards. A woman danced forward and began a hymn, which caused the drumming and dancing to begin again. Now the Prophet began to pass among the dancers, calling out "Jesus!" "Jesus!" as he moved around, laying his hands upon those within reach. He was now visibly animated and when he reached his table once more he threw his head back and, in a remarkably harsh voice, cried out "Ai!" "Ai!" "Ai!"

At his table the Prophet then said a prayer for the church, giving thanks to God that it was still active and flourishing. When he had finished, the assembly prayed in the same manner as before and this was followed by another hymn. The drumming and dancing then began once more and while this was going on the Prophet's assistant moved among the dancers, stopping here and there to whisper something in a woman's ear. Then the assistant put some water in an enameled basin and went among the dancers again, sprinkling water over their heads. Discarding the basin, he then seized certain women among the dancers and threw them into the center of the throng. These women almost immediately began rolling to and fro upon the ground amid the dancing feet of their companions and their behavior seemed to act as a catalyst for others. In the space of a few minutes no fewer than fifteen women were throwing themselves around, spinning with outstretched arms, and hitting their bodies so violently against the wooden uprights of the enclosure that the whole structure shivered and shook. At one point we had to move our chairs back to avoid the women as they fell over benches or rolled, writhing and kicking, along the ground, moaning as they did so. After about five minutes of this frenzied activity, the music stopped and most of the women staggered back wearily to their places on the benches. Four women, however, lay quietly on the ground for some time, moving only after the Prophet had laid his hands upon them. As they recovered, these women exclaimed "Jesus!" over and over again.

It took several minutes to right the upturned benches and restore a degree of order among the assembly, in preparation for the reading of the first lesson. This lesson, on the theme of charity, was read from 1 Cor 13 by an elder. During the reading the Prophet interrupted with short cries of "Ha!" The lesson was followed by a hymn and more dancing. Then the Prophet strolled among the assembly, commenting and elaborating upon the lesson. Expressing his utter contempt for idol worshippers, he told them that once they accept Christ they must give up such practices. After stressing the importance of charity in the lives of Christians, he suddenly dashed off toward the building in which the Adoration had taken place. He reappeared momentarily, carrying under his arm one of the pictures of Jesus. Moving again among the assembly he thrust the picture into the faces of several of those present, laughing dryly each time he did so, pouring scorn on those who came to him only for healing.

Returning to his table, he placed the picture at the base of the cross and called upon all those who had fasted on the previous Friday to come forward. Three women did so and were blessed by the Prophet. Then he called upon all those who had "seen" Jesus Christ to come forward. Three women and a man stepped to the front and they too received the Prophet's blessing. Then he took the basin used earlier, put some blades of grass in it, and placed it beside the picture at the base of the cross. This done, he called upon all those who had been sick and were now healed to come before him. Seven women and a man

came forward and were given a blade of grass. These they held before them as they sang a hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

The Prophet then invited testimonies from the members. Two women stood and said that they were thankful for having regained their health. One placed 1 Cedi in the basin, while the other offered 50 pesewas. Next came a young girl who said that she had been suffering from a serious fever but had recovered after the Prophet had prayed for her. She initiated a hymn, in which she was joined by others. Then a woman came and faced the assembly, telling how it was that, one day, as she was smoking some fish in her courtyard, she heard a voice from her house tell her that her child was crying. Alarmed, she had snatched it up and taken it immediately to the Prophet, who prayed for it. In a short space of time the child had recovered. With the words "God must be praised!" she put some coins in the basin.

A man stood up and, after calling out "Praise the Lord!" led the assembly in song. As they sang, they danced around the cross and the Prophet himself joined in. After this all the members of the assembly sang and danced their way toward the basin, into which they dropped their offerings. When this had been done, the Prophet approached us, while the entire assembly, singing and dancing, formed a circle around us. The Prophet clasped my hands in his and asked God to protect me and grant me long life and prosperity. Then he did the same for my assistant, asking that God bless him with a sincere wife. Then the assembly, still encircling us, prayed in its usual manner, after which the Prophet proceeded to read "messages" in the hands of some members. He paced jerkily around the enclosure, throwing a darting glance at this palm or that, never looking closely at any one hand. After such fleeting glances he would turn and look in several different directions in quick succession, stabbing his feet rapidly on the ground as he did so. At the same time he kept exclaiming "Ha!" "Ai!" and "Jesus!" and rasped out such orders as "Fast for three days!"

When the "messages" had been given, the Prophet's demeanor changed once again. Calmly and in an almost bored fashion, he outlined to the assembly the program of activities for the coming week. The service ended with a recital of the Lord's Prayer by the entire assembly.

Appendix C
SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF SPIRITIST LEADERS (1968)

A. R. Bennett (M.D.C.C.)

Pastor Bennett is a courteous and dignified man of average height and build in his mid-fifties. He is a Fanti whose family originally lived in Cape Coast and he still has many relatives living in this major Fanti town. Bennett, however, was born in Nigeria in the town of Bonny, which lies on the eastern edge of the Niger delta, in the year 1912. His parents had moved to Bonny only a short time earlier and both left the Methodist church, to which they had belonged from birth, to join the African Orthodox Catholic Church. His father became a pioneer pastor in this early independent religious body which grew out of the work of a Nigerian ex-Anglican, Garrick Braid, and the later influence of Marcus Garvey's African Orthodox Church. While his father devoted himself full-time to his pastoral work, his mother worked in the market at Bonny as a petty trader. After some six years attending the Primary school run by his father's church, the young Bennett became an A.O.C.C. catechist and worked in this capacity for a further six years, during which time he also acted as a teacher in the school. In 1936 he married and moved with his wife to Accra, where he entered the A.O.C.C. ministry in the following year. During the years which followed he gradually "lost faith" in the A.O.C.C., the main reason for this being the successive deaths of three of his children in early infancy. Believing that there must be something "seriously lacking" in a church which offered little protection even for its pastor's children, he left the A.O.C.C. and, with his wife (who had also been a member of A.O.C.C.), joined the M.D.C.C. in 1947. From 1947 to 1948 he was an assistant pastor in the M.D.C.C. assembly at Ekumfi, near Swedru. After his ordination into the M.D.C.C. ministry in 1948 he stayed on at Ekumfi for a further year, then worked successively in assemblies at Essiam, Akwamu, Apam, Kwanyako, Sekondi, Abora, Accra, and Kumasi, before his transfer to Winneba in 1967. He and his wife now have four children, all of whom are members of the M.D.C.C.

Kobena Donkor (Twelve Apostles)

A quiet, nervous man, Pastor Donkor is an Effutu who was born in Winneba "about forty years ago." His father was a fisherman and his mother a fishmonger. At the time of Kobena's birth both parents were pagans but later

joined the M.D.C.C. Kobena also attended M.D.C.C. services as a boy but gradually lost touch with the church after he left home, which was sometime around 1946. Both parents continued their membership in M.D.C.C. and remain active members of the Winneba assembly at the present time. Pastor Donkor did not attend school but was apprenticed to a local stonemason, with whom he worked for some five years. After the completion of his apprenticeship he moved to Accra, where he was employed by a number of building contractors, including C.F.A.O. (Compagnie Français Afrique Orientale) and A. Lang. It was while he was employed by the latter company that he was sent to work on a building site at Nsawam, a town about twenty-five miles northwest of Accra. The job lasted only a few months and, when it was finished, Donkor and several other workers were laid off. He then went back to Accra to collect his personal belongings and it was during this brief stay in Accra that he had the dream which was to change his life. In his dream Donkor saw himself working with a prophet whom he had never seen before and whose name he did not know. When he returned home to Winneba he related the dream to his father, who took him to visit Prophet Jehu-Appiah of the M.D.C.C. at Mozano. After questioning Kobena Donkor closely about the dream, the Prophet prayed for divine guidance and then revealed that the man he had seen in his dream was Prophet Kofi Sasa, the head of Twelve Apostles. Donkor then went to see Prophet Sasa at his Swedru headquarters and was accepted as a trainee pastor. During his period of training, which lasted some six years, Donkor accompanied the Prophet on his travels throughout southern Ghana, visiting most of the assemblies in this part of the country and learning all he could from the Prophet about the work he would be required to do. Eventually, in 1966, he was ordained and sent to Winneba. He is married and his wife and children are members of his assembly.

Moses Kofi Appiah (Church of the Lord)

Captain Appiah is a lean, wiry young man with an earnest and serious manner. He is an Ashanti who was born in the village of Esikesu in 1943, his parents having moved there from their original home in Bekwai. Both parents were pagans but became Methodists just before the birth of their son and have remained Methodists up to the present time. Moses was sent to the Presbyterian Primary school at Dunkwa and then went on to complete Middle school by 1959. After leaving school he worked as a trainee fitter (mechanic) in the town of Dunkwa, lodging with his brother, who was a pastor in the Church of the Lord Aladura assembly there. Here he helped his brother informally with his religious duties and became a member of the assembly. As his interest in the church grew, he decided to become a pastor like his brother, beginning a three-year training period which ended with his ordination in 1963. In the following year, however, he decided to throw in his lot with the Yamoah-led Ghanaian independents—the Church of the Lord Ghana—after reaching the conclusion that "there were more opportunities" in the Ghanaian body. That same year he went to see Bishop Yamoah, the

Primate of the Church of the Lord Ghana, and in 1965 he was sent to revive the flagging Winneba assembly. Captain Appiah is married and his wife is a member of the local assembly; his children are too young to be members at present, but they attend services regularly. His brother, however, has remained in the ministry of the "mother church" which has its headquarters in Nigeria.

R. S. Arthur (Cherubim and Seraphim)

Bishop Arthur is a stockily built, intense man in his mid-thirties and is a member of the Fanti tribe. He was born in 1934 in Akim Abuakwa, in the Eastern region of Ghana, his parents having moved there from Kromantine, near Cape Coast, when his father took a job as storekeeper with the U.A.C. (United Africa Company). Both his father and his mother (who is a petty trader) have been Methodists from birth and remain so today. In 1943 Bishop Arthur entered the Methodist Primary school in Cape Coast and completed Middle form 4 in 1952. He then went on to the Aggrey Memorial secondary school in the same town but, after completing form 3, he became seriously ill and had to end his schooling at that point. After some seven months spent recuperating from his illness, he left home to take up employment as an assistant storekeeper in the Public Works Department in Kumasi. This job lasted two years, after which he obtained similar employment with a private company in the same city. In 1958 he left Kumasi and went back to Cape Coast to look for work. One night, while in Cape Coast, he had a dream which proved to be the "turning point" in his life:

> . . . in this dream I saw the whole town of Cape Coast in flames. There was nobody strong enough to put out the flames. Then I appeared as the saviour of the town. I built a mighty house and the people of Cape Coast rushed into the house to escape from the fire. But soon the house became so crowded that I could not enter it. As I stood at the entrance to my house, I saw the town continue to burn, with many people who could not reach its shelter dying in the flames. Then I saw a very high mountain. I raised my hands in prayer and, as I did so, saw the flames gradually die. Now, with my hands raised on high and the flames losing their heat, I managed to climb to the top of the mountain. In my dream I saw myself at prayer on the mountain and, while I prayed, someone handed me a white cassock and a rod. Stretching out my hands, I accepted these gifts.

Arthur interpreted this dream to mean that God intended him to be a pastor, so he joined Cherubim and Seraphim in Cape Coast and was made a "disciple" or trainee pastor. After three years of training he was ordained in 1961, being sent to Winneba immediately thereafter. Soon after his arrival in Winneba, he married Hannah Botsie, a member of the assembly, but this marriage ended in divorce in 1965. After this he found it necessary to take a full-time job as storekeeper with G.N.T.C. (Ghana National Trading Corporation), although he returns to Winneba each weekend to attend to his religious duties. He has since remarried and his wife is currently training for the Cherubim and Seraphim ministry.

Hannah Botsie (Divine Healer's Church)

Sister Botsie (not to be confused with her namesake of the Redeemer Church of God) is an Effutu who was born in Winneba in 1920. She is a gentle, matronly woman, very mild-mannered and soft-spoken. Her father was a farmer and her mother a petty-trader and both were life-long Methodists. At the age of seven she went to the Methodist Primary school in Winneba, but an accidental fall from a tree put an early end to her education after only two years. When she had recovered from her injuries she was sent to Accra to stay with her cousin. Here she remained for almost twenty years, during which time she learned to be first a baker and then a seamstress. She left Accra soon after her marriage, accompanying her husband when he went to work as a miner in the Belgian Congo. There she stayed for seven years, returning to Ghana with her husband in 1956. For a time she lived in Accra, but later moved to Winneba when she and her husband separated in 1960. While in Accra she obtained a passbook which allowed her to set up business as a cloth-seller in the market; she continued in this line of work after her return to Winneba. Throughout her life she had regarded herself as a Methodist, attending services on a fairly regular basis in Accra and Winneba. But in 1961 she left the Methodist church after being troubled by "bad dreams," which the church was unable to help her overcome. She came to feel that:

> . . . in the Methodist church there was no healing; our dreams were never explained or interpreted; we never had messages. Nothing was done to heal us of our diseases and no word at all was said about our future. There was nothing spiritual about the Methodist church.

She then went to consult the local pastor of the Divine Healer's Church, who explained that "certain evil spirits" were troubling her; he managed to rid her of these. After this she became a member of the Divine Healer's Church and eventually became a leader in the women's section. Her decision to enter the ministry came after she had a dream in which she saw two people immersing her in a river and another person raising his hand in blessing as she came back to the shore. She then became an assistant to the pastor in Winneba, serving in this capacity until the pastor was transferred about a year and a half later. At this point she received her letter from Brother Lawson, the head of the church, inviting her to come to Accra for ordination. This took place only four months before our interview. Sister Botsie has not remarried and her two children, who are in their late teens, live in Accra with a relative. Neither attends church, although both have been educated to Middle form 4 level in Roman Catholic and Methodist schools.

James Kofi Tabil (African Faith Tabernacle)

A tall, angular man with a somewhat vague, far-away manner, Pastor Tabil is a member of the Denkyira tribe and was born in the village of Enyan Abasa "about thirty-one years ago." Both parents were farmers and remained

pagans throughout their lives. Pastor Tabil never attended school and worked with his parents on their farm until he was about twenty years of age. Then he became a driver's mate but tired of this after six months. His next job was as an apprentice stonemason, but he left this employment after about a year when he found that it was no longer interesting for him. After this he worked for three months learning the art of wood-carving but found that he could not hope to make a living at this and so moved on to work as a sawyer in a lumber mill at Nkwaoso, in the Wassaw district. Here he was able to earn decent wages and he felt that he would try to obtain a driver's licence and perhaps later save up enough money to buy his own lorry. Having made this decision, however, he was plagued by a recurring dream in which he saw himself involved in a terrible road accident. This caused him to give up his plans for a lorry. While he was thus involved in changing from one job to another, he was also changing his religious affiliations. While he was at home with his parents he had been a pagan, but after he moved away he became a Moslem. This lasted only a short period of time (approximately six months) for he found that being a Moslem was "just praying and nothing else." He then began to attend the Methodist church for about a year but stopped after he became ill with "severe chest pains." The Methodists could do nothing for him in his troubles so he went to Anyinam to consult Prophet Nkansah, the founder and head of the African Faith Tabernacle. There he was cured and this impressed him so much that he became a member of the church and stayed on at Anyinam to become an "evangelist" or trainee pastor. For five years he assisted at a number of assemblies in southern and central Ghana, finally being ordained in 1967. After his ordination he was sent to Winneba. His wife is a member of the church, although before her marriage she was a pagan, and his children are taken along regularly to services.

Joseph Baiden Prah (Life and Salvation Church)

Pastor Prah is a reserved man whose manner is somewhat shy and diffident, although as a preacher he exudes confidence and delivers sermons in a loud, almost ranting voice. He is a member of the Fanti tribe who was born in Saltpond in 1928. His father was a police constable and his mother a baker and bread-seller; both parents became Roman Catholics before their son was born and remained members of this church throughout their lives. He entered the Roman Catholic Primary school in 1937 and after ten years completed his schooling at Middle form 4 level. After leaving school he went to work as a time-keeper at a gold mine in Obuasi, in the Ashanti region. In 1951, after some four years at the gold mine, he moved to Prestea, in the Wassaw district, where he had a job as an orderly in the hospital. In 1958 he returned to the gold mine once more, this time to work as a winch-operator. Although he had been raised as a Roman Catholic, he became a member of the Methodist church when he went to Obuasi, since this church was the most convenient to reach

from his place of work. But when he returned to the gold mine to work as a winch-operator, he felt that the job was very dangerous and that he was in need of "divine protection." And so he paid a visit to his family home in Saltpond and went to Prophet Prah while he was there. He received the Prophet's prayers and was anointed to protect him from accidents and misfortunes at work. When he returned to Obuasi after this visit he found that his dreams were always about Prophet Prah and in one particular dream he saw himself upon a platform preaching. So he left for Saltpond again and told Prophet Prah about his dreams and of his desire to be a pastor. The Prophet agreed to train him for the ministry and he remained at the Saltpond headquarters of the Life and Salvation Church for six months while he underwent instruction. After this he was sent, as an assistant pastor, to a number of assemblies, being finally ordained in 1967 (after four years as an assistant) and sent to Winneba. Pastor Prah, who is not related to the head of the church, is married with two children. His wife had been a Methodist from birth, but she is now a member of her husband's assembly and attends services regularly with her children.

John Oben (Divine Healing Church)

Brother Oben is a slim, boyish-looking young man, somewhat hesitant and withdrawn in manner. A member of the Ahanta tribe, he was born "about twenty-six years ago" in the village of Shama, near Sekondi. His father, now deceased, was a clerk in the Post Office and his mother is a fishmonger. Both parents were Roman Catholics from birth, but the mother has since become a member of the Divine Healing Church. At the age of seven John Oben entered the Roman Catholic Primary school in Takoradi and, when he moved to stay with his uncle at nearby Sekondi, he managed to continue his education and complete Primary form 6. While he was at school he worked part-time as a trainee fitter for about six years. After leaving school he was employed as a fitter by U.A.C., with which company he worked for just over five years. His next job, also as a fitter, was at the fishing boat yard at Sekondi and it was while he was working there that he became very ill with severe head pains. He was so ill that he "almost went mad." Although he had been baptized and confirmed in the Roman Catholic church, he took the advice of a workmate and went to consult Prophetess Aba Essabah, the founder and head of the Divine Healer's Church, who cured him of his head pains. In gratitude, he decided to "offer the rest of my life to the service of God." After two years of training he was made a pastor in 1966 and sent to open a branch of the church in Winneba. This attempt was not successful and he returned to Shama for a brief period toward the end of the year, returning to Winneba again in 1967. Pastor Oben is married and his wife, who was formerly a pagan, is a member of her husband's assembly.

Alfred Kwame Hagan (Christian Church)

Pastor Hagan is a nephew of the founder and head of the Christian Church, Apostle John Taylor. A neat, wiry man of jovial disposition, he was born in 1933 near Obuasi, although his parents were originally from Saltpond. He is a member of the Fanti tribe. His father was a cocoa-buyer and his mother a petty-trader and both have been Methodists from birth. In 1939 Alfred Hagan entered the Roman Catholic Primary school at Agona Nyakrom and completed his education at the Saltpond Roman Catholic Primary school, after an interruption of some years, in 1950. Since he attended Roman Catholic schools, he was baptized and confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church. After leaving school he went to work at Takoradi as a tally clerk with Elder Dempster Steamship Company but after six months moved to Tarkwa. Here he became a trainee electrician and, at the same time, severed his ties with the Roman Catholic church and joined the Methodists. (At this time his uncle was a lay preacher in the Methodist church at Tarkwa.) In 1955 Hagan also became a lay preacher in this church and he continued in this role until 1959, when his uncle was expelled from the Methodist church and formed his own Christian Church. Hagan then joined his uncle's group and was made an assistant pastor in 1961. That same year he moved to Prestea, where he continued both his work as an electrician and his job as assistant pastor in the Christian Church. In 1965 he gave up his job as an electrician to become a full-time pastor and was posted to Accra that same year. In 1967 he was sent to Winneba to open the branch there. His wife, who was formerly a Methodist, is now a member of the Christian Church.

T. K. Oben (Christ Divine Healing Church)

Prophet Oben is a very thin, frail and feeble-looking old man, who gave his year of birth as "about the time of the Ashanti wars," which would make him about seventy years of age at the time of the interview. He is a member of the Agona tribe and was born in the village of Adookrom, near Swedru. He could not remember his father, whom he thought had divorced his mother soon after he was born; his mother he remembered as a petty trader who was never converted to Christianity. His mother also worked a small farm and he helped her with this when he was a child. When he was perhaps eleven or twelve years old he came to Winneba to live with his uncle, who was a fisherman. He felt that he was not likely to be a successful fisherman himself, so he went to Sekondi to live with another uncle, who was chief steward in the household of a European. It was while he was living with his uncle that he first went to school (probably at the age of fourteen or fifteen) and was converted to Christianity. His uncle was a Methodist and arranged for him to attend a Methodist Primary school for six years; during this period he was baptized and confirmed in the Methodist church. While he was at school he displayed a

great fondness for quoting and discussing the scriptures and this led his schoolmates to give him the nickname *Osofo* (priest). His uncle also observed young Oben's interest in religion and, although he was a Methodist, took him to Cape Coast to consult with the Rev. J. B. Anaman, who founded the Nigritian Church (an early independent church of the "Ethiopian" type) in 1918. Here he was advised to try to earn some money before embarking on a religious career and he returned to Sekondi, where he began work as a fitter. Soon afterwards, however, his eyesight began to fail him and after about a year he was completely blind. Unable to work, he came back and settled in Winneba, where he was a regular attender at the Methodist church services. In 1953 he went to Cape Coast to attend a rally organized by the Latter Rain Evangelical Association, an American body with its headquarters in Portland, Oregon. He had hoped to be cured of his blindness at this rally, but in this he was to be disappointed:

> Although many people were healed, I was among the unfortunate few who were to be disappointed. But God rewarded me in a different way. After several days of fasting and praying, I received the Holy Ghost. I could now have visions and dream dreams. I came back to Winneba confident that I could be of use to my church.

At first it appeared that the local Methodist authorities in Winneba shared his hope, for he was made a catechist and lay preacher upon his return from Cape Coast. But then he began to organize a prayer-group which met for spiritual healing in Oben's home and this came to the attention of the pastor and leaders. They advised him on a number of occasions to stop these practices, finally giving him an ultimatum in 1963. At this point he decided to leave the church with which he had been affiliated for approximately forty-five years and he established his own Christ Divine Healing Church. His wife and children are members of his church, having left the Methodist church when the prophet did so.

Kojo Dugan (Dugan's Church)

Prophet Dugan is a tall, muscular man of approximately fifty years of age who conveys an impression of great energy and drive. He speaks rapidly in a rather harsh voice and gives force to his words with gesticulations of his arms and the occasional pounding of his fist upon his palm or thigh. The most striking thing about his physical appearance are his eyes, which are very bright and seem to glow with great intensity when expressing strong feelings, which is very often. He was born in the hamlet of Esuekyir, near Winneba, and is an Effutu. His father (now deceased) was a farmer and his mother worked on the farm and did some petty trading. Both parents were pagans, but his mother has recently joined her son's church. Dugan did not attend school but in his early teens came to Winneba to train as a blacksmith. Later he moved to Koforidua, about forty-five miles north of Accra, to stay with his cousin and while there he joined the Methodist church, to which his cousin belonged. He

attended the Methodist church for about six years but toward the end of this period came to realize that he had "the Spirit" and began to heal people privately in his own home. When the church authorities learned of this, he was warned against continuing this practice and so he left to join the M.D.C.C. Within a short space of time Dugan was made a leader in the assembly and eventually became an assistant pastor. He parted company with the M.D.C.C. in 1957 following a dispute with his pastor, whom Dugan had accused of adultery. After a hearing in which the pastor was found to be innocent, Dugan was suspended for six months and it was during this suspension period that he decided to leave the M.D.C.C. He stayed on in Koforidua, however, and continued his spiritual healing activities from his home. In 1963 he left for Winneba, intending to concentrate on blacksmithing and give up his healing practice. But he found that, while there was little demand for his services as a blacksmith in Winneba, people began to come to his house for healing and spiritual protection. He then decided to form his own assembly and, since people referred to it as "Dugan's Church," he saw no need to devise a new name for it. Prophet Dugan is a self-proclaimed polygynist; his two wives were formerly pagans but are now members of his church.

Jonathan K. Mensah (Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple)

Prophet Mensah was born in Winneba in 1935, the son of a farmer who, with his wife, began life as pagans but became Moslems before Jonathan's birth. An outgoing and friendly man, Jonathan Mensah attended Methodist Primary and Middle schools in Winneba and was baptized and confirmed in the local Methodist church. He transferred to the A.M.E.Zion Middle school to complete Middle form 4 but retained his membership in the Methodist church. After leaving school he went to Prestea where he had a job as a "chop boy" (cook's assistant) in a logging camp for a year. He then moved to Swedru and worked for about seven months as a trainee electrician with the Municipal Electricity Department before deciding to train as a Methodist catechist. In 1958 he entered Freeman Theological College in Kumasi and completed a six months catechist training course, after which he spent two short periods acting as catechist in Methodist congregations in Ashanti villages. It was in 1959 that he became ill with what he describes as "back pains" and, after finding no relief at the hands of doctors in Kumasi, he followed the advice of a friend and went to Accra to consult Brother Lawson, the leader of Divine Healer's Church. There he was cured of his trouble, but before he left the healing camp he had "a vision" in which Brother Lawson spoke to him and asked him to be his assistant. He reported this vision to Brother Lawson and was taken on as an assistant pastor. At first he served in this capacity at the Odokoo assembly in Accra, but after his ordination in 1960 he was transferred to the Teshi assembly in another part of the city. Here he remained until 1965,

when he had another vision, this time one which directed him to establish his own church. In his vision he saw clearly a large signboard bearing the name "Holy Spirit Divine Healing Temple" with his own name underneath this. He immediately left Brother Lawson's church and formed his own group in Accra, opening up a number of small out-stations in places along the coast, including his home town of Winneba. After two years in which he found it difficult to attract a substantial following, he moved his center of operations from Accra to Winneba. Prophet Mensah is married; his wife, who was a recent convert to Methodism before her marriage, is now a member of her husband's church and their two children attend services there with their mother.

Alice Quansah (Waternakaba)

Prophetess Quansah is a rather quiet, unassuming woman who found it difficult to understand why anyone, particularly a European, would be interested in what she did in her own small church. An Effutu, she was born in Winneba in 1927. Her father, who is still alive, is a pagan and was a farmer until he retired; her mother, who is deceased, was a pagan who became a member of the A.M.E.Zion church some time before the birth of her daughter. After her mother's death, Alice Quansah was sent to live with the wife of her father's eldest brother in Accra and this woman, who was an Anglican, had her niece baptized in the Anglican church at the age of six. During her stay in Accra she attended this church regularly but she was "not very enthusiastic." She was not sent to school in Accra and is unable to read and write. Sometime around 1942 she returned home to Winneba, helping her father's second wife with household duties and engaging in some petty trading. When she was about twenty years old she started going to the Anglican church in Winneba but gave this up after a year and did not seek confirmation. For a period of approximately twelve years she had no contact with any church in the town and "did nothing about religion." But in 1960 she became very sick with what she described as "palpitations and heart trouble" and sought a cure at the local branch of St. Anthony Healing Power Church. By this time she was thirty-three years of age and still unmarried, but at St. Anthony Healing Power Church "I was immediately healed and when I left the church I got married almost at once."

Her husband was a pagan and neither he nor she attended any church during their married life together, which ended in divorce in 1965. (As she has no children, it is possible that this may have been a major factor in the break-up of her marriage.) Shortly after her marriage failed she had a "vision" in which "the spirit of an angel" appeared and instructed her to establish her own church, which was to be named Waternakaba. This was in 1966. The Prophetess has not remarried.

Hannah Botsie (Redeemer Church of God)

Prophetess Botsie is a tall, graceful woman whose physical appearance is marred only by her right eye, which is unfocussed and probably sightless. In conversation she is quite relaxed and composed, although in the conduct of services in her church she is impressively dramatic to a degree unmatched even by Prophet Dugan. An Effutu, Prophetess Botsie was born in Winneba in 1935. Her father is a fisherman and her mother a petty trader and fishmonger; both were pagans but have recently joined their daughter's church. As a young girl she helped her mother at the market and later began to cook and sell *kenkey* (fermented corn dough) on her own. Her first contact with a Christian church took place when she was about fourteen:

> During my adolescence I sometimes behaved as if a spirit was in possession of me. My parents thought that I was being taken by one of the gods to serve as its *Okomfo*. I consulted the pastor of the Church of the Lord about this and he told me that it was not a bad spirit that was hunting me, but a good spirit. So I decided to become a member of the church.

She attended Church of the Lord services fairly regularly for about five years, but eventually "lost interest" and stopped. For about four years, until she was about twenty-three, she did not attend any church. But one day, as she was on her way to visit a friend who lived near the meetingplace of Cherubim and Seraphim, she felt "the Spirit" driving her toward the church instead of her friend's house. She joined the assembly in the middle of the service and later, when the service had ended, talked to the local leader, Pastor Amankwah. He told her that she had a mission to fulfill to God and that unless the call was heeded she would not live long. This advice was repeated by a Nigerian leader (Prophet Atansuye?) who was on a visit to Ghana at that time. She joined the church but was content to remain an ordinary member, doing nothing about her misssion until the arrival of the new pastor, Bishop Arthur, in 1961. He too told her that she should fulfill her mission to God and so she decided to train for the ministry. She became first a cross-bearer, then an evangelist, and was finally ordained in the summer of 1967. All her training was conducted by Bishop Arthur, whom she married in 1962. Although this marriage ended in divorce in 1965, Arthur continued to prepare her for the ministry of Cherubim and Seraphim. When her former husband took a job in Cape Coast she was left in charge of the local assembly and all went well until a Captain Impraim was sent to assist her. They did not get along well and soon a struggle for control of the local assembly developed between the two, with the membership splitting into two opposing groups. Bishop Arthur backed the Captain in this conflict and so Hannah Botsie left in September of 1967 to form her Redeemer Church of God, supported by some thirty members. Prophetess Botsie has not remarried and there were no children of the marriage to Bishop Arthur.

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